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Special treatment for South-East

BR promises money back for late trains

BY MICHAEL DYNES, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

TWO distinct types of compensation for delayed services, including cash refunds, will be unveiled today by British Rail as the launch of its multi-million pound passengers' charter.

Travellers on Network SouthEast who suffer delays and cancellations will be given cash compensation and other customers who are delayed by more than an hour will be given travel vouchers worth up to one-fifth of the cost of the journey.

The compensation scheme, originally intended to apply only to annual season ticket holders, will be extended to all rail users.

The charter, which will be presented by Sir Bob Reid, the BR chairman, will also establish performance targets

so that passengers have clear guidelines about the level of compensation they can expect for delays to any given service. Targets in the Network SouthEast region will be set to reflect the investment BR has made on each line.

Travellers using the Network SouthEast services on upgraded lines, which are less likely to be disrupted, will receive higher compensation than passengers on routes that have not yet been improved. The charter specifies, for example, that rail users on the upgraded Great Northern line, operating between London, Cambridge and Stevenage, will be paid more than travellers who suffer delays on the London to Tilbury and Southend line and services in Kent, which have not yet been modernised.

BR paid out an estimated £7 million in cash and travel vouchers last year under its existing discretionary compensation system. About £3 million of that sum was spent on extending season tickets for travellers whose journeys were disrupted during bad weather.

Under the new scheme, BR could pay up to £10 million in cash and travel vouchers in a bad year, although Roger Freeman, the transport minister, has already made it clear that the government would not want to endorse

any scheme that involves significant costs.

Publication of the passengers' charter, which was fore-shadowed by John Major's launch of the citizen's charter last year, was first called for in a report by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in 1979. Sir Peter Parker, the former BR chairman, oversaw the introduction of the first commuter charter in 1981, which promised passengers a wholesale improvement in punctuality and reliability, providing £1 billion was invested in the railways during the 1980s.

BR had hoped to complete its present investment programme before the new two-tier compensation plan was introduced. However, rail managers are understood to have come under considerable political pressure to extend the scheme to all passengers, to overcome some of the hostility that has built up towards BR over the past 18 months.

John Prescott, Labour's transport spokesman, yesterday dismissed the proposals as "an exercise in public relations. I predict that it will do nothing to improve quality on the railways," he said.

The charter will use the old trick of re-defining what is a late train. They did that before with InterCity. In 1986-7, 23 per cent of trains were more than five minutes late; in 1987-8, only 13 per cent of trains were considered to be late because the definition was more than ten minutes after the advertised time.

"Compensation paid out to Network SouthEast passengers suffering long-term failures in service quality may be targeted to specific lines in marginal constituencies," however, Mr Prescott said, "passengers don't want compensation for a poor service, they want better quality - and they will not get it through a rail charter aimed at paying for failure not investing in success."



Reid: will today unveil BR passengers' charter

Tests on abortion girl could trap her rapist

BY EDWARD GORMAN, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE teenage girl at the centre of the abortion dispute in Ireland is reported to be in Britain for genetic tests to help to convict her rapist.

The 14-year-old, who had been banned from travelling abroad by a High Court injunction until the decision was overturned by the Supreme Court last week, is not believed to be seeking an abortion during the visit, but she may return shortly to have a termination. She is believed to be at least 12 weeks pregnant.

Senior police officers in Dublin are said to be keen that genetic tests be carried out after discussing the subject with the girl's parents.

The Irish Attorney-General was alerted to the case after initial enquiries by the family about how to gain genetic fingerprinting evidence once an abortion had been carried

out at a London clinic. He sought the High Court injunction in accordance with the constitutional ban on abortion.

The rapist, described by a High Court judge last month as "depraved and evil, is alleged to be the father of a school friend. He has vehemently denied allegations against him.

A debate on whether the constitutional ban on abortion should be deleted or amended opens in the Irish Senate today. The issue will also be discussed at a meeting of bishops at Maynooth, Co Kildare, next week.

The government is unlikely to decide what action, if any, is required until ministers have considered the full judgment of the Supreme Court, which is expected to be handed down either tomorrow or Friday.



Flying lesson: Norma Major, prime minister's wife and former teacher, starts a pancake race in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, yesterday, by demonstrating the politically apposite art of getting out of the frying pan

Women launch test case over raised retirement age

BY LINDSAY COOK AND FRANCES GIBB

THE Equal Opportunities Commission is backing 91 women in a test case against their employer who increased their retirement age from 60 to 65 without their consent.

The case, which is likely to lead to another European Court ruling on pensions, is the latest twist in the fight to ensure equal pension benefits in Britain for men and women.

The women were told last June by Avdel Systems of Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, that to comply with a European court judgment, their retirement age was being increased to 65. Those women who chose still to retire at 60 would find their pensions reduced by 4 per cent for each year below 65.

The commission is backing one named employee, Marie Jones, plus 90 others in their industrial tribunal claim. The commission is already supporting a second pensions case involving 31 female employees of Cameron Iron-works in Leeds.

The EOC agreed yesterday that in some respects it looked as though their landmark ruling in the Barber case in 1989, which held that pension benefits were part of pay and men and women had to be treated equally, had backfired. Some 60 per cent of employers are equalising pension ages upwards to 65, and as a result, hundreds of women are being denied the full pension they expected at 60. Lorraine Fletcher, the

EOC pensions adviser, said: "Two recent surveys highlight the problems women face. One shows that 60 per cent of employers have responded to the Barber judgment by equalising upwards at 65, and yet we are not sure whether this is lawful. Our own research shows that pensions systems don't deliver adequate pensions for women. Equalising upwards without consultation or protection appears to be adding insult to injury."

Alan Lakin, the commission's senior legal adviser, said the European court had to decide "whether, to give effect to a judgment that declares there must be equal treatment, you can deliver

that equal treatment by disadvantage one sex". Ms Jones said: "We were totally devastated and hurt to think that the company could treat us like this. We cannot believe that this was the only course of action open to them."

Avdel said it was acting in "common with the majority of employers".

Today, the government will launch a £100,000 campaign against discrimination at work. More than 36,000 companies will be sent a guide urging them to formulate policies to help women, ethnic groups and the disabled find a job.

Unhappy returns
L&T section, page 5

Old Welsh counties may come back to life

BY DOUGLAS BROOM
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

TWENTY-three local authorities will take over running Wales, restoring the county names of Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire to the map, if the Conservatives win the general election.

David Hunt, the Welsh secretary, said yesterday that the authorities will result from the merging of 37 district councils and the abolition of eight county councils. Cardiff and Swansea will regain ad-

ministrative controls they lost in 1974.

The plans for Wales are the first to be unveiled from the government's promised reorganisation of local government in Britain. Whitehall said that the proposals for replacing county councils with unitary authorities bearing traditional county names were likely to be repeated in England.

Map redrawn, page 7

Snared Clarke licks his wounds

A government ambush in the Lords walked into a trap of its own making. Sheila Gunn and David Lipsey write

Ambushed he may have been in the Lords the previous night, but Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, sounded anything but mortally wounded when he appeared on the Today programme yesterday morning. He was not yet ready to give the government's considered response to the events of the previous night, where the Lords had (in the words of its proposer, Lady Blatch) "torn the heart" from his bill to further the "parent's charter" for schools.

But he was fully ready to seek political capital from the defeat by pinning the blame on the teachers' unions for sponsoring the wrecking amendments.

The unions, it is true, have been active in opposing the Education (Schools) Bill. On February 18, a letter signed by six teaching union general secretaries had been sent to every peer.

They protested at its provisions that education authorities should not be allowed to send in inspectors, and that inspectors were to be appointed by governing bodies. But the unions were not alone in lobbying for change. The bill's critics included the local authority associations, and many educationalists.

One of the amendments passed by the Lords was proposed by Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, grandson of Stanley Baldwin, the Tory prime minister. Earl Baldwin, himself a former education officer, is a cross-bencher. Nobody would think of him as a union poodle.

Though the unions were active in drafting amendments, those carried by the Lords were differently worded from those the unions proposed.

Even union officials closely involved in the campaign were disinclined to claim the credit. "I wish we were that powerful," says Olive Forsyth of the National Union of Teachers.

The government's defeat owed less to union power than to the tactical skills of the bill's opponents.

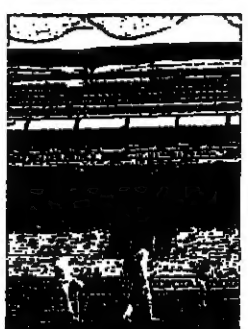
A Tory whip once com-

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Clarke's new deal, page 2

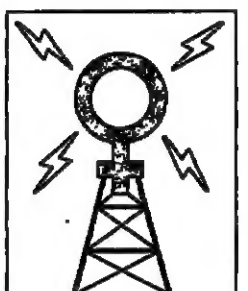
TODAY IN THE TIMES

NEW OLD TREASURES



Michael Hopkins is transforming the appearance of sacred English sites with a sense of context
Life & Times
Page 3

MAKING WAVES

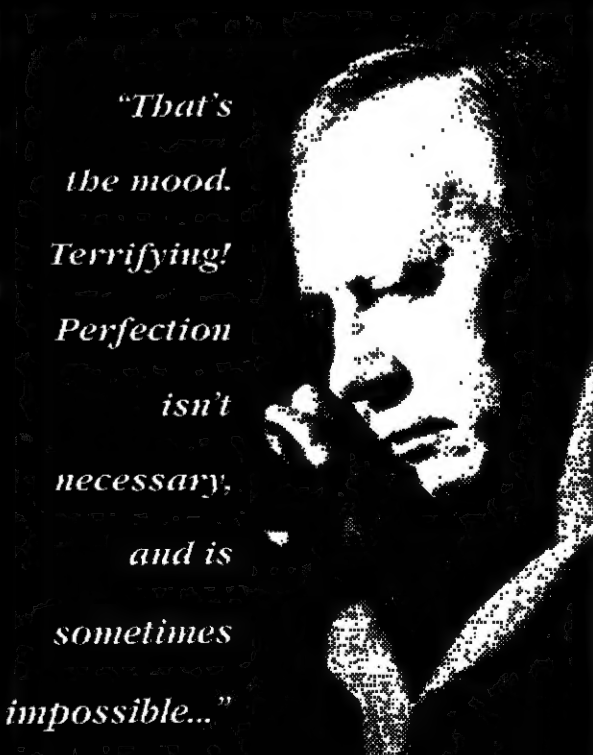


Fern FM, Britain's first all-female radio station will open on Sunday
Life & Times
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DIET DEBATE A BIT FISHY



James Le Fanu finds ideal-diet arguments by the World Health Organisation unconvincing
Page 12



Neeme Järvi on Shostakovich in the March issue of

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UDR soldiers convicted of murdering Catholic man

By EDWARD GORMAN, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

TWO Ulster Defence Regiment soldiers, both former members of mainland regiments, were convicted by Belfast crown court yesterday of the murder of a Roman Catholic man. The crime, in August 1989, led to the setting-up of an outside investigation into collusion between Loyalist paramilitaries and the security forces in Northern Ireland.

Andrew Browne, aged 27, who had served with the Gordon Highlanders, and Andrew Smith, aged 31, who served with the Devon and Dorset Regiment, received life terms.

They were convicted with two other men of aiding and abetting in the murder of Loughlin Maginn, a father of four aged 28, who was shot dead at his home at Rathfriland in Co Down in August 1989. It is believed that the men who actually pulled the trigger have never been arrested.

In trying to justify the killing, the Loyalist paramilitary Ulster Freedom Fighters (a cover for the Ulster Defence Association) said they had singled out Mr Maginn after identifying him as an IRA liaison officer on intelligence material leaked to them by the security forces.

The claim led to the enquiry into collusion between the security forces and Loyalists. It was headed by John Stevens, formerly deputy chief constable of Cambridgeshire. Jailing the soldiers, Lord Justice Kelly said that he

hoped their prosecution dispelled once and for all the notion that only gunmen could be guilty of murder.

Browne, of Blaris Park, Lisburn, was also convicted of the murder of Liam McKee, killed two months before Mr Maginn. Lord Justice Kelly said he had tracked both victims for the UFF.

"He was an accessory before the fact to each murder in that he targeted the whereabouts and movements of each of these men, believing them to be members of the IRA, and then passed on the information he acquired to the UDA," he said.

The judge said that Smith, of Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co Down, had been persuaded by Browne to steal ammunition from his base and passing it on to him for use by the UFF.

Browne was given concurrent terms totalling 64 years, but because he had once been "an exemplary soldier and an honourable man" the judge did not recommend a minimum term. Smith received a total of 66 years and again no recommendation was made.

Jeffrey McCullough, aged 29, of Tonagh Park, Lisburn, a self-confessed UFF man, who had driven the gunman to the shooting of Mr Maginn, and Edward Jones, aged 27, of Blaris Park, Lisburn, who had taken Browne and a UDA man on a reconnaissance mission to the Maginn home two weeks before the killing, were also jailed.



Free to laugh: former hostages Terry Waite and John McCarthy with foreign secretary Douglas Hurd, left, and wife Judy after a luncheon yesterday in London

Social fund boosted after critical report

By JEREMY LAURANCE
SOCIAL SERVICES CORRESPONDENT

THE government last night announced a £75 million cash injection for the social fund, the safety net for the poor, after its watchdog committee on social security yesterday published a report criticising the fund as a "lottery" inadequate to meet needs.

The 30 per cent increase will take the fund's budget to £302 million in 1992-3, Nicholas Scott, the social security minister, told the Commons. However, Michael Meacher, for Labour, said that £40 million had already been used to top up this year's allocation of £228 million in response to the rise in unemployment.

Only £35 million of the increase was new money, he said. Earlier, Peter Barclay, chairman of the Social Security Advisory Committee, said that the fund's budget should be doubled. The committee's report recommended major restructuring of the fund to make it fairer.

People living on income support should qualify automatically for a grant of at least £500 if they move to unfurnished accommodation, the report said. A mandatory grant would end the "lottery" of payments being made at the discretion of fund officers.

Lords' coup on school inspectors Clarke tries for new deal

By JOHN O'LEARY AND SHEILA GUNN

KENNETH Clarke, education secretary, remained defiant yesterday over his plans to privatise school inspections as government business managers attempted to salvage as much as possible of the Parent's Charter.

Mr Clarke insisted that two defeats in the Lords would not prevent the Education (Schools) Bill becoming law before a general election. A series of statements implied that the government would overturn the amendments at the bill's report stage in the Lords next Tuesday.

The scale of the defeats makes a government victory

uncertain, however. Negotiations had begun with the Lords and opposition parties last night, leaving open the possibility of withdrawing the government's proposals to reform school inspections.

With Parliamentary time running out before an April 9 election, ministers' priority is to ensure the survival of sections of the bill introducing league tables of schools. Although the amended system of inspections is widely regarded as unworkable, a deal may be struck to accommodate the Lords' wishes in a redrafted version of the bill.

Mr Clarke is understood to have discussed the defeats with John Major yesterday morning before a meeting at Downing Street on the Tory election manifesto.

The two amendments passed by the Lords gave the head of Her Majesty's Schools Inspectorate power to approve school inspection teams, and restored local authorities' rights to inspect their own schools. School governors were to have chosen their own inspectors, allowing access to local authority inspectors only if they tendered successfully.

Opposition spokesmen claimed that the effect of the defeats was to turn the inspection plans into a Labour bill. Baroness Blackstone, Labour's education spokeswoman in the Lords, said: "Mr Clarke's measure would unquestionably have damaged standards in schools. His measure has no friends."

Stephen Byers, chairman of the metropolitan authorities' education committee, appealed to the government to

withdraw the whole bill to allow talks to take place on new methods of inspection and monitoring of standards. Mr Clarke replied: "I will certainly not withdraw the bill, and I remain confident that it will reach the statute book."

In an earlier radio interview, he said: "This bill is very important, it is the Parent's Charter Bill. It is important that we do get the performance tables, more information to the public."

"It is very important we open up inspection to the outside world and what I still believe is we can get a bill through parliament that will bring in a system of regular inspecting and reporting back to parents."

Teachers' and inspectors' organisations expressed relief at the success of the amendments. William Wright, general secretary of the National Association of Inspectors and Educational Advisers, said: "This offers a real hope that the whole ragbag of nonsense will be consigned to the rubbish bin, where it belongs."

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said: "The amendments introduce much needed sanity into the inspection arrangements for schools, which were always fatally flawed." Russell Clarke, assistant general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association said: "The government needs to have an independent national inspection system which has the respect and support of parents, teachers and schools."

Anatomy of a coup, page 1

DNA test 'trapped killer'

Body samples frozen by scientists for ten years helped to trap the killer of a teenage girl 13 years after she was raped and strangled, a court was told yesterday (Craig Seaton writes).

The body of Candice Williams, aged 13, was found on the roof of a 12-storey block of flats in Erdington, Birmingham, in 1978, but a massive police investigation failed to find her killer. Richard Wakerley, QC, for the prosecution, told Birmingham crown court that Patrick Hassett, aged 33, of no fixed address, who lived in Erdington at the time, had been arrested in February last year for the murder of the girl. Mr Hassett denied the charge.

Mr Wakerley said that scientists took semen samples from the girl's body in 1978 and froze them at the Forensic Science Laboratory until the technique of DNA profiling or genetic fingerprinting was developed. He said that after Mr Hassett's arrest last year, a DNA profile from a strand of his hair was found to match that of the semen sample taken from the girl's body.

Mr Wakerley said that the girl had been strangled with a shoelace and her cardigan. She was killed so that she could not identify her attacker.

The trial continues today.

148mph dash

Leslie Coe, who drove his sports car on the M25 at 148mph and claimed he was late for a wedding, was banned from driving for six months, fined £700 and ordered to pay £110 costs yesterday by Brentwood magistrates, Essex. Police chased Coe, aged 34, of Brentwood, for two miles before his Porsche slowed in traffic at the Dartford tunnel. He denied reckless driving.

Debt lessons

Three primary schools in Birmingham are introducing lessons on how to deal with hardship, which will teach children as young as eight about the perils of debt and homelessness and the benefits they may become entitled to. The scheme has been operating in secondary schools and a sixth form college for five months and is to be extended in Nechells, Ladywood and Sparkhill.

Short victory

British fortunes improved in the sixth round of the international chess tournament in Linares, Spain, with Nigel Short defeating Viswanathan Anand (India), and Jon Speelman drawing with the world champion, Gary Kasparov. Leading scores after completion of adjourned games: Kasparov 4½ points out of 6; Beliavsky (Ukraine) and Karpov (Russia) both 4. Short has 2½.

Russians paint the Queen in miniature

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

TWO Russian artists spent almost two hours with the Queen yesterday, painting the first portrait of a British monarch to be commissioned by the Kremlin.

Leonid Efros and Alexei Maximov, miniaturists from St Petersburg, are painting an enamel portrait that will be added to the portraits, historic china, regalia and jewellery of the Russian tsars now housed in the Kremlin Armoury. An exhibition of the treasures will held next year in the Tower of London, and Buckingham Palace agreed to a Russian embassy request in December that her portrait should be included.

The two artists joined a sitting arranged for a Spanish painter, Theo Ramos. "She was so nice," Mr Efros said. "She talked to us and made us feel at ease — the

atmosphere was very natural. It was like being at home."

The artists made sketches and water colours during the sitting but will not be granted another. They said, however, that the live sitting and personal contact with the Queen had been of vital importance. Mr Efros said that he expected the enamel painting to take up to four months to complete.

They have also been commissioned to paint the Princess Royal, and a sitting is to be held next week. The Russians are negotiating with the Palace to approach other members of the royal family for sittings. They then hope to move on to King Juan Carlos of Spain, Queen Beatrix of The Netherlands, King Baudouin of Belgium and any other European royalty who can be persuaded to sit.

Nuns seek to evict ex-novice

By RICHARD DUCE

A FORMER novice nun is fighting to keep her home of 50 years in a legal dispute with an order of French nuns who claim the house is theirs, the High Court was told yesterday.

The Sisters of the Congregation of Tours want the court to order the eviction of Patricia Wright from the house in Muswell Hill, north London, said to be worth £210,000.

Robin Hay, for the French order, said Miss Wright, who is in her fifties, borrowed money in 1981 from the Sis-

ters to buy the property for £15,000. She borrowed a further £45,000 to refurbish the house.

Then in 1982 Miss Wright handed the property over to the nuns when she became a postulant at their convent in France. But after six months there were doubts about her suitability for religious life, Mr Hay said.

In June 1985 she returned with a sister Dalichoux to the Muswell Hill house with a gift of £3,500 to help them settle on condition that they moved after six months.

The two women are still in the house.

The nuns want to sell the property and in 1988 had an offer for £210,000. They offered to give half the net proceeds to Miss Wright after deducting the purchase price and refurbishment costs so that she could buy somewhere smaller.

Miss Wright claimed she has a right to the house and wanted £100,000. She has refused to leave, and the house has still not been sold. The hearing continues today.



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Banks launch £3m campaign to fight plastic card fraud

BY SARA MCCONNELL

BANKS and building societies announced a £3 million advertising campaign yesterday to raise public awareness of plastic card fraud, which cost them £165.6 million last year.

Figures released yesterday by the Association for Payment Clearing Services, which represents 21 high street banks and building societies, disclosed that fraudulent use of cards had cost the banks £43.1 million more than in 1990. Out of 80 million cards issued, at least 2 million are lost or stolen every year, an average of 5,500 a day.

John Davies, chairman of

the association, said: "Our purpose is to declare war against the plastic card criminal." The industry will use national press advertising and direct mailing to get across the message of its new Card Watch campaign, and is working with the Home Office crime prevention unit and the police.

Last October the banks told Kenneth Baker, the home secretary, that they would commit £500 million over three years to help to fight card fraud.

Banks and retailers are working together to develop new technology to beat fraud

at point of sale, where three quarters of all card fraud is committed. Talks are going on with the fair trading office to allow card issuers to lower levels at which transactions have to be authorised by the issuer in eight of the most vulnerable retail sectors by the end of June. Of licences and shops selling electronic equipment are among the worst hit. Mervyn Gibson, chairman of the Plastic Fraud Prevention Forum, said. The Royal Bank of Scotland and the TSB are experimenting with photocards. However, some banks argue that these would put the onus on retailers to examine the photograph and many would not do so as they do not have to pay for fraud.

The association is also looking at the use of personal identification numbers (PINs) at the point of sale to identify customers. Biometric techniques, which involve comparing fingerprints, digital signatures and voice recognition, are being considered. However, any techniques which embarrass the customer or take too long in a crowded store are unlikely to be adopted. Mr Gibson said that the disadvantage with fingerprinting customers was that it could make them feel like criminals.

A file of more than three million wanted card numbers is being collated and card issuers are developing computer systems which will be able to detect unusual patterns of card use and stop the card before it is reported missing.

Climber lowered 2,000ft to safety

BY KERRY GILL

AN INJURED climber was recovering in hospital last night after 24 members of the Lochaber mountain rescue team spent all the previous night on Ben Nevis struggling against appalling weather to rescue him. The man had broken both legs when he fell 800ft onto a ledge.

The team carried out one of the longest "lowers" of its kind attempted in the UK when they linked a series of ropes to drop the injured man and his stretcher 2,000ft to safety. It was the second consecutive night the Lochaber team had spent on the mountain.

Paul Bliss, aged 39, a probation officer from Sheffield, had completed his ascent of Tower Ridge on Ben Nevis's north face on Monday afternoon and was about to move onto the Great Tower when he slipped, falling onto a narrow ledge. He was joined by a companion and the two roped themselves to the ledge to await help. It was the start of a 15-hour ordeal in driving hail and winds.

The alarm was finally raised more than four hours later and the rescuers set out, reaching the 4,406ft summit by about 11pm. A helicopter was forced to turn back because of the atrocious weather but, by midnight, the team had reached Mr Bliss.

His members then began the tricky operation to lower him and one of the rescuers to open ground where a helicopter could reach them.

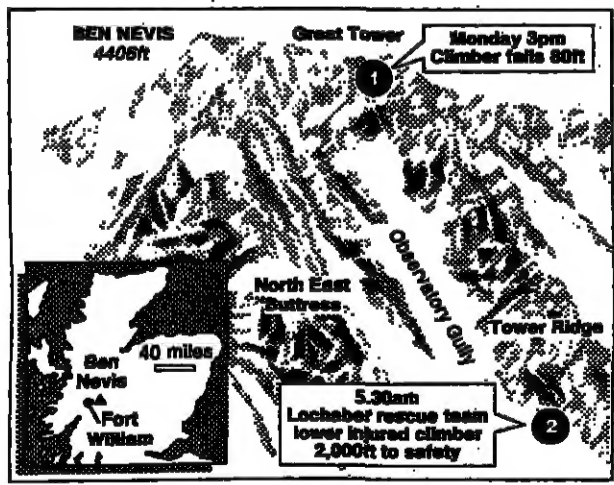
By the time Mr Bliss had been lowered to Observatory Gully it was 5.30am. He was flown by helicopter to Belford hospital then transferred to

Raigmore hospital, Inverness. Only 48 hours earlier the Lochaber men had been called to a gully on Ben Nevis where, with members of the RAF Leuchars rescue team, they saved Michael Thomas, a Gloucestershire doctor, who had broken a leg after falling 800ft.

Donald Watt, aged 54, leader of the team, said: "All the team members went home on Tuesday morning very tired, shattered in fact, but elated and in high spirits having brought a fellow climber down to earth. On occasions we were up to our waists in mud as we made our way up the lower slopes. The same 24 would be prepared to turn out tonight again and do exactly the same thing."

Inspector Robbie Smart, police co-ordinator, said: "The lads deserve tremendous credit. Despite being out overnight on two occasions since the weekend they were back at work in their various jobs this morning," he said. "But there's no doubt this constant activity must be sapping their strength and they simply can't keep going night and day."

This year four climbers have died on Ben Nevis. In January a lecturer and student from Glasgow university died in a 1,000ft fall on Observatory Gully, and a Blackburn pharmacist died in a 700ft fall down Comb Gully. Last week a teacher from Worcester slipped and fell to her death 800ft down Coire Leis. A Belfast librarian remains critically ill after being transferred to Aberdeen Royal Infirmary after falling 800ft on Devil's Ridge.



Woman for Queen's Bench

BY FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A NEW woman High Court judge joined the predominantly male ranks at the Royal Courts of Justice yesterday, the first woman to be appointed to the Queen's Bench division.

The swearing in of Mrs Justice Ebsworth, previously a circuit judge and crown court recorder, brings to only four the number of women judges in the High Court and Court of Appeal of a total 111. The paucity of women judges in the senior judiciary is worse than a decade ago, when there were three women High Court judges out of 73 compared with three out of 84 now.

Dame Anna, aged 54, joins the Court of Appeal judge Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, and, in the High Court family division, Mrs Justice Bracewell.

Lord Justice Butler-Sloss is the only Court of Appeal judge out of 27; and the three High Court women judges, including Mrs Justice Ebsworth, take their places alongside 81 men. On the circuit bench, there are 22 women out of 469.

The new judge was called

to the Bar (Gray's Inn) in 1962. She lives in Cheshire, and gives her recreations in *Who's Who* as travel, medieval history and needlework.

Her appointment, which is not a replacement but an extra post, comes at a time when there is pressure from within the legal profession and outside for more women judges. The Lord Chancellor's department, which last year sought, without much success, to boost the numbers of women judges on the circuit bench said yesterday that one reason was the very



Ebsworth: fourth woman judge in High Court

poor rate of applications from women for the post of assistant recorder, the lowest judicial rung. Only 8.5 per cent of applications are from women. "The Lord Chancellor has made clear that he would like to see more women on the bench but he can only appoint them if they apply."

Jonathan Caplan, QC, chairman of the Bar's public affairs committee, said he was "surprised and saddened" that there was such a low rate of application from women. "If the percentage is as low as that, we must strive to make every effort to make sure more women apply for part-time judicial posts."

Although Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, has expressed concern about the shortage of women judges, he opposes positive discrimination or "fast track" for women candidates. The new Lord Chief Justice, Lord Justice Taylor, who takes over in April, is also against special procedures for women, insisting that appointments must be on merit alone.

Women
L&T section, page 5



Change for a tenor: Pavarotti announces his plans to lose weight

Pavarotti draws the line at haggis

BY KERRY GILL

LUCIANO Pavarotti, for all his 22-stone bulk, cut a mildly disappointing figure when he ambled across the soft carpets in the Loch Lomondside hotel where he is preparing for tonight's concert at the Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre in Glasgow.

Depending on the rumours that have surrounded his visit he was either in a "terrible state" through lack of sleep, had ballooned to 26 stone, lost his voice, was refusing to answer any questions, had spent the morning singing in his bath or had ordered an extra set of velvet curtains for his suite to keep out the unseasonal Scottish sun.

Pavarotti, in fact, appeared rather more down to earth than his public relations people, despite the strip of sticky tape on the carpet which denoted the point beyond which members of the possibly diseased press should not pass for fear of passing on colds. He looked well, smiled and greeted everyone with a *buon giorno*.

He confirmed that he had sung in his bath, but could not remember what, although he had hummed "On yon bonnie banks of Loch Lomond" the previous day. No, he had not put on weight. "I do have weight problems, come, come. But I am on a diet. I have lost eight pounds. When you see me next I will have a red carnation otherwise you will not recognise me."

He was asked why he had chosen such an expensive hotel, so much security, so many Mercedes Benz cars for his entourage, and made so

many requests for his comfort, including two golf carts at the exhibition centre.

"I need a beautiful hotel but it is not for me, it is for my voice," he said, as though the voice might still be lying on a chaise longue upstairs. "You must consider that my voice is the most important thing to me so I try to take care of it more than is possible."

Forget the voice and opera, had he been eating porridge or haggis? *Il Maestro* needed an explanation and then a translation of the explanation for a haggis. "I don't know what he describes," said Pavarotti, with some justification. "A stomach of a sheep that is filled!" Last night, he said, he would be eating a casserole of beef.

He explained that he was unable to enjoy the scenery to the full because of "the voice" but, he added, Scotland was very much like Italy. It had beautiful food — haggis aside — wonderful scenery, charming people. A persistent questioner returned to the subject of the golf carts. "Maybe the dressing room is two kilometres from the stage," offered Pavarotti.

He then was swept out to his Mercedes Benz fleet doubtless still wondering about the sheep's stomach. No one must leave before *Il Maestro*, shrieked his guards. The hotel manager denied that Pavarotti's room had been sealed for a month before his arrival and cooed in dust sheets to provide a dust-free environment.

James LeFam, page 12

HOOT

FOURTH OPEN LETTER FROM SHROPSHIRE ABOUT OUR RAIL SERVICES

Dear Reader

Last week you read our letter to Mr. Rifkind about British Rail's plan to axe our InterCity Link in May. Our fight might seem remote to you.

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As we continue the fight for Telford and Shrewsbury InterCity trains you can learn from our experience.

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- ignore SOCIAL and ECONOMIC benefits
- operate with UNRELIABLE and UNPROFITABLE rolling stock

OUR RAIL SERVICE NEEDS MORE INVESTMENT AND A CHANGE OF POLICY — DOES YOURS?

Joan Hayward
Chairman
R.O.C.T.

(The Campaign of the Shropshire Community to save the InterCity Service to London)

Howard Fargher
President
Shropshire Chamber of
Industry and Commerce

Survey shows shift to self-reliance

Britons reject nanny state

BY ALISON ROBERTS

BRITONS are turning away from state provision and helping themselves, according to a survey on consumer spending published yesterday.

Over the past ten years, there has been a significant rise in the proportion of income spent on personal security. Expenditure on sickness and accident insurance has grown the most — by an average of 21 per cent a year since 1981, the market research company Mintel says.

Premiums paid into life insurance and pension schemes amounted to £10.1 billion in 1991, compared to £2.2 billion in 1981, and represent the second-largest growth area. We are also spending more on private medical treatment, NHS charges and private education than ever before.

Bill Patterson, a market analyst, said there had been a clear change in attitude towards personal provision and providing for children.

"The perceptions that money can buy you a better health service and better education have developed over the decade to a point where it is considered sensible planning to

make your own provision rather than rely on the state," Mr Patterson said. "Independence through self-reliance and financial stability is very much in vogue for those that are able."

Over-the-counter health-care products have also experienced a boom in sales. Spending on such goods has risen by 57 per cent since 1986, with the largest amount spent on painkillers and dietary supplements.

Consumers have been saving more, to reduce debt and to provide for an uncertain

future, according to the survey. In 1990, 4.9 per cent of income was saved; last year the figure was 6.4 per cent.

Providers of financial and insurance services have experienced a huge rise in demand, and Mintel forecasts continuing growth in the market over the next five years, regardless of who wins the election. Mr Patterson said: "As more and more people opt out of the state systems, the funding and management of those that are left may need a radical rethink."

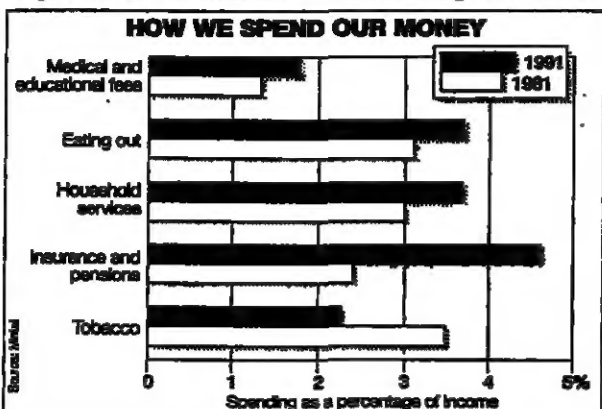
The self-help ethos extend-

ed to employment, the survey said. The self-employed accounted for 60 per cent of the 2.1 million jobs created in the past ten years.

John Cunningham, Mintel chief executive, said: "Many people have metaphorically got on their bikes and gone in for self-help. There has been a sea change in the nature of employment."

The number of people employing help at home is rising significantly. Domestic and garden help is the fastest-growing sector of the household services industry, up by almost 450 per cent in the past decade. The market is now worth £2.9 billion, and Mintel predicts that it will reach £5.5 billion by 1996.

The survey reports a long-term rise in living standards measured in income and personal acquisition. Mr Cunningham said: "Although we are still suffering from the longest recession since the war, the longer-term increase in living standards is clear."



Leading article, page 13

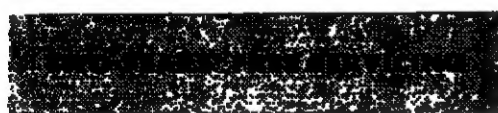


Puppet regime: Anne Amoros assisting *Le Señor Z*, wild west hero of the shadow theatre, in his battle against the brutal reign of a bloodthirsty gang leader at Battersea, southwest London yesterday. *Le Señor Z*, based closely on Zorro of television fame, was fighting it out in the premiere of the latest

production by the French shadow theatre company Amoros et Augustin, making their first appearance in the UK. The theatre is inspired by cinema, television and animation and, using large-scale shadow projections thrown onto numerous screens, conjures up images of breathtaking rides on spirit-

ed horses and merciless gunfights. The company appears again today at the Battersea Arts Centre as part of Visionmix, a five-day festival celebrating the art of live puppetry, organised by the Puppet Centre with the support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Arts Council

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Paying for the peace dividend

ON THE surface, Barrow-in-Furness is faring well. Unemployment is not intolerably high and the cathedral-like structure that dominates the skyline can expect at least two more Trident submarines included in the £3,500 million VSEL order book.

Peace may have prevailed but the country will still require the kind of weaponry that Barrow-in-Furness is skilled at producing. Today, as HMS Vanguard, the first Trident submarine, emerges from VSEL's Devonshire dock hall, looming over the town is the knowledge that even with an end to the recession the number of jobs at VSEL is likely to fall to about 7,000, half the total of two years ago.

Nobody appears to question the company's figures and a government study indicated that next year unemployment in the town could rise to 25 per cent. Barrow is over-reliant on one company, one product and one customer: VSEL, submarines and the ministry of defence.

Unless orders are won for surface ships or oil-related work, and the economy improves, the workforce could drop towards 5,000 — the point at which the yard ceases to be viable. With one in four of the town's workers directly employed by VSEL and a web of other smaller companies relying on the yard, the result would be devastating.

VSEL now employs 10,500. The next largest company in town employs about 700. The British Nuclear Fuels site at Sellafield, an hour's drive away, is laying off workers and elsewhere in west Cumbria the story is one of cuts and closure.

Steve Palmer, chief executive of Cumbria Training and

The town that built the Trident submarine fears for its future in a world without the Cold War, reports Ronald Faux

Enterprise Council, says that by the end of the decade up to 19,000 jobs will have gone in Cumbria, a haemorrhage that is being staunchly by training and retraining packages, and the setting up of small businesses.

"An enterprise zone for Barrow is needed before the skills are lost and people leave. Barrow has probably the deepest reservoir of highly skilled manufacturing labour in the UK and the peace dividend has made some of that labour available," he said.

Harry Knowles, chief executive of Furness Enterprise, a public-private sector initiative to attract investment, insists there is plenty of other local industry that can be developed. A succession of ministerial visits and the appointment of a department of trade action team suggested that the government was not unaware of impending crisis.

Bob McCulloch, chief executive of the borough council, welcomed a £15 million factory building programme but wondered how firms would be attracted to move into them. "We have lost 4,000 workers already but how can Barrow compete with the Sunderlands of this world when it is not an assisted area. Imagine the level of skill contained in a Trident submarine and the tragedy of that skill being lost to Barrow."

Fugitive may be extradited

A BUSINESSMAN who fled from Britain nearly three years ago when facing charges over a £1.2 million fraud may be extradited after being arrested in The Netherlands (Stewart Tendler writes).

Jai Benie, aged 39, who left a record £780,000 bail forfeiture, was arrested in Haarlem and could be on trial in a British court before the end of the year following a Customs and Excise investigation. The Home Office and the Dutch authorities have agreed that Mr Benie, from Harwich, Essex, will serve his sentence in a Dutch prison if convicted of theft and fraud.

He disappeared in October 1989 facing 18 offences of evading Common Agricultural Policy import levies on rice between February 1988 and July 1989. He was twice released on £725,000 bail of his own money and two sureties of £25,000 and £30,000. He was due to reappear in court in October 1989.

When he failed to reappear the £725,000 and a £25,000 surety were ordered to be forfeited. The second surety was surrendered later and the court ordered the money to be passed to Customs and Excise commissioners.

Nuclear Electric prosecuted

Government safety watchdogs are to prosecute Nuclear Electric for alleged breaches of licence conditions at Hinkley Point B station in Somerset.

The Health and Safety Executive Nuclear Installations Inspectorate said yesterday that the company had breached conditions covering modifications and the provision of back-up generators to maintain essential supplies in a mains power failure.

The case is due to be heard in Bridgwater on April 29.

Boy rapist

A boy aged 16 who twice raped a girl of eight at her home in East Dulwich, south London, and infected her with a venereal disease was sentenced by the Central Criminal Court to be detained for three years.

Airport boost

Air Atlantic is to invest £1 million in a new runway at Caernarvon airport, Gwynedd, and is planning flights to Cardiff, Swansea and Liverpool.

Clocking on

A clock outside the Bull hotel, Bridport, Dorset, which stopped 50 years ago, has been restarted after a twig was found to be jamming the works.

Health and safety report

Doctors urge shift from car to the bicycle

By BILL FROST

CYCLING could transform neurotic, overweight Britons into healthy, well-balanced people doing their bit to save the planet, the British Medical Association said yesterday.

The association's report, *Cycling Towards Health and Safety*, published as a book, describes the activity as an ideal form of exercise, causing less stress for the body than running and being more widely available than swimming. But it calls for radical changes in transport policy to improve road safety and encourage motorists to leave the car at home.

Dr Jeff Cundy, one of the report's authors, said that a cyclist aged 35 covering 60 miles a week stood a 20 per cent lower risk of suffering a heart attack than a non-cyclist. There was also evidence that riding a bicycle reduced the incidence and severity of mental illness.

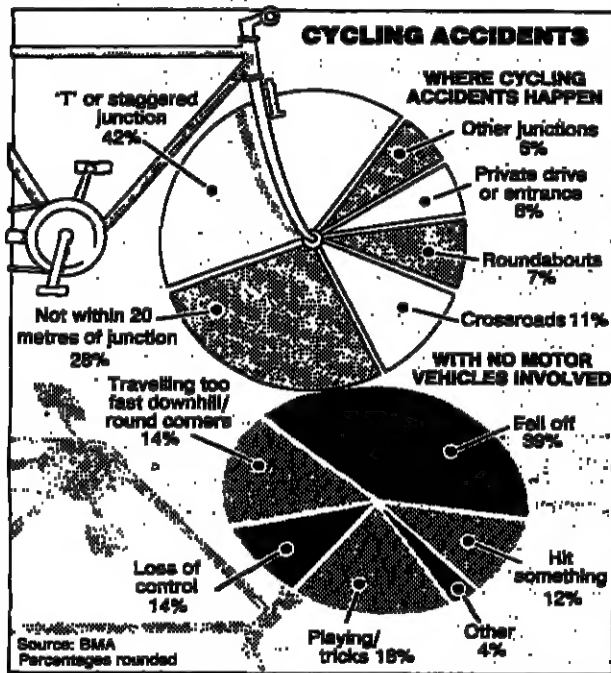
The book says that cycling reduces blood pressure, improves cardio-vascular fitness, increases stamina and trims body fat. The greater use of bicycles would reduce air and noise pollution and largely solve the growing problem of traffic congestion. Even in the "current hostile traffic environment" — al-

most 300 cyclists died in accidents during 1989 — the collective health and fitness benefits outweigh the loss of life, the book says. The association makes several recommendations aimed at reducing deaths, particularly among teenagers, including lower speed limits in urban areas, a network of cycle lanes and a campaign to convince riders to wear helmets.

Dr Mark McCarthy, another of the report's authors, said: "If this society takes the safety and health of its people seriously, then there must be a co-ordinated approach to encouraging cycling from central and local government."

Colin Graham, planning officer of the Cyclists' Touring Club, said: "At last we have an authoritative report raising the profile of cycling. It will be difficult for the departments of health, environment and transport to ignore the benefits of promoting cycling."

Cycling Towards Health and Safety (British Medical Association, Oxford University Press, £5.99)



Driver took wrong side of M-way

By TIM JONES

A WIDOW who drove for 20 miles at up to 50mph on the wrong side of a motorway while three times over the drink-drive limit was fined £1,250 and banned for three years yesterday.

Anne Rowbotham, aged 62, went on her drive down the M3, forcing oncoming cars to swerve past her, hours after her "beloved" pet dog had been put down, magistrates at Basingstoke, Hampshire, were told.

Drivers who had flashed their lights at her inundated a police traffic unit at Winchester with calls, Patsy Southworth, for the prosecution, said. At one point, Rowbotham had encountered a police officer in a dog van who had had to brake hard.

Rowbotham, of Petersfield, Hampshire, was stopped when a policeman in a patrol car drew alongside her and forced her to pull over. Police were alerted after Rowbotham, a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, was seen to hit a parked car at Durrington, Wiltshire, at 12.30am on December 29 last year. Several motorists tried to stop her as she drove the wrong way on the A303 towards the M3, which she joined heading southbound on its northbound side.

A breath sample showed 112 microgrammes, the legal limit is 35. Rowbotham told police that she had panicked after hitting the car.

James Rankin, for Rowbotham, said that the car was her antidote to loneliness. Her husband had died ten years ago and her only companion, her dog, had been put down on the day of the incident. "She panicked, she simply didn't know what to do," he said. "Thank goodness the other people on the road were sensible."

Rowbotham was fined £1,000 for reckless driving and £250 for drink-driving and was told to re-take the driving test after her ban.

Time cures computer virus

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

AN electronic virus dubbed the "digital paper shredder" and which is due to strike computer systems this Friday can be combated by judicious time-keeping, police and experts said yesterday.

The Michelangelo computer virus is programmed to detect and then trigger when a computer's clock clicks from Thursday the fifth to Friday the sixth of March, the anniversary of the Italian artist's birthday.

The virus enters computer systems from "infected" floppy discs. Not only is it particularly pernicious but it also appears to be widespread, with tens of thousands of computers worldwide contaminated.

Barry Donovan, of the computer crime unit at New Scotland Yard, said yesterday that a temporary solution could be found in moving a computer's clock a day forward to March 7, thereby bypassing the virus's trigger date.

The advice was endorsed by Edward Wilding, editor of the *Virus Bulletin*. "It is a stopgap measure but it should work for 99 per cent of computer users," he said.

Some memory systems, called SMOS, are designed to maintain features such as the internal calendar and clock when the power is switched off. But moving the clock a day forward might not register on the memory on some systems, still leaving the machine vulnerable.

Other ways of combating the virus, which is believed to have originated in Australia, include "simply not using your PC on March 6 and booting the machine from a clean disc", said Mr Wilding. Safest of all, said Mr Donovan, is to acquire a software scanning system, many of which can detect the Michelangelo virus.

The familiar Friday 13th virus is due to strike again next week.



Peddalling back: Gordon Hawkins and Chris Boneu of W.R. Pashley Cycles test ride Moulton bicycles, which have returned to the production line after an absence of 20 years. Tim Pashley, of the Stratford-upon-Avon engineering company, which is making the new Moulton All-Purpose Bicycle under licence from the designer, Dr Alex Moulton, was yesterday supervising the assembly of

bicycles to go on show at the Cyclists' exhibition at Olympia, west London (Robin Young writes).

The APB, lighter than the original and capable of being split in two for easier carrying, will sell for about £500, one-third the amount that the cheapest Moulton now costs. Since Raleigh abandoned large-scale production of Moultons in 1974, Dr Moulton, who created

his original designs as a spare-time occupation between inventing and refining suspension systems for the Mini car, has built some 3,000 bikes himself. They cost up to £2,900 each.

Dr Moulton said yesterday: "The new bike will have almost all the advantages of my most expensive designs. It will appeal to people who do not want the image a conventional push-bike gives."

Pub firm fined for short measures

By DAVID YOUNG

A PUB crawl by trading standards officers, who found that 71 out of 75 pints served had heads that were too frothy, ended yesterday with a national pub chain being fined £2,000 with £800 costs.

Greenalls Management Ltd admitted selling two pints of Tetley's Bitter with "excessive heads" in a case brought before magistrates at Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

The court was told that one of the frothy beers was 12.5 per cent short of a full 20 fluid ounce pint measure. The other £1.16 pint sold at the Heathcote Inn last June was 9.5 per cent short.

It is believed to be the first time that a company operating a pub chain, rather than a manager or bar staff, has been prosecuted for serving a short-measure pint.

Margaret Whitehead, for the prosecution, said that a company information sheet told bar staff that a pint must have a collar of no more than five millimetres. That sheet was not on display in the pub due to an oversight.

Mrs Whitehead said: "In this case, the heads measured 2.3cm and 1.5cm respectively. In money terms, that represents a loss to the customer of 14.5p and 11p."

The company could have avoided short-measures by introducing "over-size" glasses to accommodate the beer and a frothy top, she said.

"The deficiencies were excessive and unreasonable and not acceptable to customers," Mrs Whitehead said. "The customer was not served with what he ordered and paid for — a pint. Nationally, short-measuring is a problem that runs into millions and millions of pounds a year."

Malcolm Parkes, defence counsel, said that it was not the company's policy to short-measure customers. He said: "Greenalls are the first to accept that the customer has a right to a pint of liquid. The level of training imposed is high." Managers had to serve as relief managers for up to a year and obtain the relevant professional qualification.

Later, Robert Faulkner, the official who bought the beer, said that the case "should spell the end of the Coronation Street-style pint". The government has said it is to activate legislation making it an offence to include the head in a pint measure.

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Kinnock challenged on health spending

By Philip Webster, Chief Political Correspondent

THE prime minister yesterday questioned the sincerity of Neil Kinnock's approach to the health service by challenging him to state how much Labour would spend on health and where it came on its list of priorities.

With only a handful of question time confrontations available before the calling of the general election, the Labour leader was again trying to preempt the Budget by highlighting the choice between tax cuts and extra spending on public services.

The government was interested in bribing, Mr Kinnock said, while the people wanted to build. With recent polls suggesting that health is rising as an electoral priority, he turned his attack on the health reforms, asserting that a system that put cost before care "betrays the fundamental principle of the NHS."

The prime minister accused Mr Kinnock of "bogus compassion."

With MPs now certain that the election will be announced next week, Commons exchanges have become increasingly noisy

and feverish. Business managers on both sides are braced for frenzied parliamentary scenes as the government tries to push through the remainder of its legislation in the dying days of the parliament before the expected dissolution on Monday week.

Yesterday's question-time row gave a glimpse of the trench warfare to come. Mr Kinnock had quoted a London cardiologist as saying that patients were going without treatment for financial reasons, and added: "Such a system which puts cash before care betrays the fundamental principle of the NHS."

Amid uproar Mr Major responded there was no system that put cash before care. He said the government had provided more additional resources in this parliament than Mr Kinnock was prepared to promise in the last election manifesto.

Mr Kinnock said that the surgeon had a very powerful point when he said the new

system "is run by accountants who don't have to sit across the table and say to patients: I cannot treat you until the new financial year."

"It is tragically wrong for treatment for seriously ill people to be determined by money rather than medical need."

Mr Major said: "The view you attribute to that surgeon is certainly not shared by others — by Nye Bevan's nephew, as you know... The resources are at a record level and the new system is making sure the resources work better for patients. There is no other way to improve health care and there is no doubt that the new system, across a range of treatments, is improving health care."

Mr Kinnock said Mr Major was going to borrow to fund tax cuts when the British people's priority was to use available resources for health and other essential services.

Tom Clarke, Labour MP for Monklands West, claimed there was an acute shortage of intensive care beds for children and demanded action to ensure that never



Message to the people: Roy Hattersley, the shadow home secretary, has tea with workmen at Covent Garden, London, after launching an election poster

again would "desperately sick children be turned away from hospitals, which don't have the money to provide emergency treatment". Mr Major said that for next year the government was providing an extra £2.7 billion for the NHS.

Earlier John Townend (Bridlington, C) claimed Labour would put up both income tax and interest rates. Mr Major said an average of forecasts by ten independent City analysts showed that interest rates would rise by

2½ per cent immediately "if there were to be such a disaster as a Labour government".

In a rowdy session before the Commons employment committee, Michael Howard, the employment secretary, was accused of causing public cynicism by alleging "good news" about the economic prospects when the opposite was true.

Mr Howard admitted that unemployment had risen 38 per cent, from 1,891,600 to

23,604,100, over the past 12 months.

Ronald Leighton, the chairman, criticised Mr Howard for delivering an upbeat message to the committee last November about the end of the recession, a fall in unemployment, a rise in retail and car sales. Mr Howard insisted that every answer he gave was "scrupulously accurate". He defended the decision to join the exchange rate mechanism as offering the great prize of low inflation.

Poll reveals that 40% feel worse off in recession

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

FORTY two per cent of people claim their financial situation has got worse in the past five years, and only 28 per cent say it has got better, according to a NOP poll published yesterday.

The poll of 869 adults, commissioned by Labour and carried out between February 20 and 23, showed that 75 per cent of people think the economy has got worse and 67 per cent think the general state of Britain has deteriorated in the same period.

Jack Cunningham, Labour's campaign co-ordinator, said that 68 per cent of those polled thought the health service had got worse and 67 per cent thought education services had suffered under the Conservatives. Dr Cunningham, in buoyant mood after the last three opinion polls which put Labour ahead, insisted the party was in a better position, with a 1 to 4 per cent lead, than in a similar period before the 1964 election when Harold Wilson came to power and Labour was two points ahead in polls.

"We have never pretended that it would be easy to overturn a huge Tory majority", Dr Cunningham said. He and other shadow ministers put forward their predictions in the "unbelievable" event that the Tories won the election.

Harriet Harman, Labour's health spokesman, said that

on present trends more than ten million people would be paying privately for their health care by 1997, leading to "a well-established two-tier health care system".

Michael Meacher, the shadow social security secretary, said the basic state pension would be "left as a means-tested rump, a badge of inadequacy and stigma". John Prescott, the shadow transport secretary, said that on the government's timetable, the Channel tunnel rail link would not operate until 2005 — 12 years after the tunnel opens. He suggested that the government should work with the Opposition on an agreed consensus, using the eastern route via Stratford and King's Cross, to bring the date forward.

In the NOP poll, 42 per cent said their own financial situation had got worse in the past five years. 28 per cent better, 28 per cent neither and 2 per cent did not know. When people were asked to assess their situation over the past 15 years of Conservative government, 40 per cent said they were worse off and 28 per cent better off. On the economy in general, 75 per cent said the position had got worse over the past five years, and 8 per cent said it had got better, compared with 65 per cent and 16 per cent respectively under three Conservative governments.

Labour chooses capital strategy

By Our Political Staff

LABOUR is to focus on London as one of the key areas in its election campaign as polls show that it and the Conservatives are now neck and neck in the capital.

A regional breakdown of Gallup 9000, taken in January, shows that the Tories have only a 0.2 per cent lead over Labour, according to Labour sources. This represents a 7.05 per cent swing since the 1987 election, when they had a 14.3 per cent lead.

Labour has set itself the target of achieving the extra 1 per cent swing needed to pick up the 25 London seats it needs for victory. London has more marginal seats than any other region with 21 Tory seats vulnerable to Labour. It should also pick up the two SDP seats. Four Labour seats are vulnerable to the Tories. The Conservatives also risk losing two seats to the Liberal Democrats, who might also gain a seat from Labour.

A private analysis of Gallup figures by Central Office, confirms that Tory MPs are very vulnerable in seats where Labour came second in 1987. The analysis shows that the Tories are only 2.6 per cent ahead in these seats.

Party officials attribute the "massive" swing towards Labour to rising unemployment in the city. Campaigning will focus on this as well as crime and public transport, two areas which particularly concern Londoners.

The party will also hold weekly poster campaigns — kicking off yesterday with crime — which will be linked specifically to London. It will also put a London spin on any national stories of the day. The poll appears to provide further evidence that the London effect — where Labour has been dragged down by the behaviour of "loony left" councils — is on the wane.

The party's London campaign will be spearheaded by Bryan Gould, the shadow environment secretary, who was in charge of the national campaign at the last election.

Contract is awarded for toll road

The contract to build the first privately financed toll road — the Birmingham northern relief road — has been awarded to Midland Expressway Ltd, a subsidiary of Trafalgar House and Irienna of Italy.

Christopher Chope, the roads and traffic minister, said in the Commons that the road should be opened in the late 1990s. The road, which will cost about £270 million, will bring relief to the M6 and to local traffic in the A5/A38 corridor.

Staff to move

Staff at the Scottish Office in Edinburgh are to get new offices in summer 1994. Ian Lang, the secretary of state, announced in a written reply. The new building, at Leith, will accommodate about 1,400 staff from St Andrew's House and other offices in Edinburgh.

Flying reserve

The defence department is considering whether a small number of test aircrew from industry in the RAF volunteer reserve should be used as frontline reserves for fast jet aircraft, Archie Hamilton, the armed forces minister, said at question time.

Welsh hopes

John MacGregor, the Leader of the House, hopes that the Welsh grand committee will be able to hold a meeting in Cardiff, he said in a written reply.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Timetable motion on and consideration of Lords amendments to the Local Government Finance Bill. Lords (2.30): Debate on the economy.

Childcare help pledged

By Jill Sherman

THE Liberal Democrats yesterday pledged to introduce tax-free childcare vouchers and a guaranteed pre-school place for all three- and four-year-olds. The multi-million pound package, which could take five years to implement, would be funded through the 1p income tax increase which the party has proposed to finance its education programme.

Launching the party's five-point plan for childcare Ray Michie, the Liberal Democrat women's spokesman, called for a co-ordinated approach, involving the government, local authorities and

parents. Local education authorities would have a statutory obligation to ensure at least five half days of pre-school education a week for each child, either in nurseries or playgroups. The Liberal Democrats would provide £525 million in a first year to implement the policy and a further £700 million in 1993-4.

The government would provide vouchers to employers, who would then issue them to workers as part of their salary. Vouchers would be restricted to the basic rate of tax with a ceiling of childcare costs of £75 a week.

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Reform of councils planned Government redraws the map of Wales

By Douglas Broom, Local Government Correspondent

WALES will be governed by 23 new unitary local authorities if the Conservatives win the general election, David Hunt, the Welsh secretary, said yesterday.

The eight existing county councils in the principality will all be abolished and the 37 district councils will be merged to form the new all-purpose councils.

The move will restore traditional county names such as Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire and Cardiganshire to the map, while main cities such as Cardiff and Swansea will regain the control of their own affairs that they lost in the 1974 reorganisation.

Wales is the first part of mainland Britain to have firm plans for the reorganisation of local government promised by the government last year. Mr Hunt said that he had been pleased by the degree of consensus about his plans, which would be implemented by 1995.

Senior Whitehall sources said the Welsh scheme offered pointers to the likely outcome of reorganisation in England which is due to be overseen by a new commission headed by Sir John Banham, the director general of the CBI. The sources said that the pattern of existing county councils giving way to new unitary authorities with traditional county names was likely to be repeated in the rest of England.

The Welsh plan has been drawn up by Mr Hunt after eight months of consultation with local authorities and community groups in Wales. He said yesterday that the response to his plans had been "constructive and positive", and that he had become convinced of the need to move quickly to a system of unitary local government with a single tier of councils performing all functions in place of the existing two-tier system of counties and districts.

"We must establish a local government structure with

which people can identify and which is capable of delivering the high-quality services people need," Mr Hunt said. "The structure which I have outlined will serve Wales well into the next century."

The plan was welcomed by the Council of Welsh Districts, which had itself proposed the creation of 27 unitary authorities based on district boundaries. Dai Thomas, the chairman of the council, said: "We have been pressing for a unitary structure which will bring local government closer to the people it represents and Mr Hunt has accepted most of our case." He said that a system based on district councils would save £14 million a year for the taxpayer.

The Assembly of Welsh Counties condemned the plan, saying that it would add £50 a head to poll tax bills, and criticising the government for ignoring the strengths of existing counties. One senior county councillor described Mr Hunt's plan as "a quick fix designed to save a handful of Tory marginals by bringing back Pembrokeshire and a few other historic shires."

Mr Hunt said that detailed work by his officials and the Audit Commission suggested that the new structure would cost no more than the existing system. "We have not set out to make cost savings but equally we do not think it will cost any more," he said.

The Welsh secretary said there would be a staff commission to oversee the redeployment of employees from existing councils to the new authorities and a residuary body to handle the disposal of unwanted assets from councils abolished by the changes.

Although Mr Hunt said the plan represented his "final thoughts", some details have yet to be decided. He is seeking consultation on the future of the southern part of Glynwddwr district in north Wales and the future of

Brecknock and Radnorshire in central Wales. There was strong local feeling in favour of having two counties, although his existing plan proposed a united Brecon and Radnor council.

In south Wales there will be further consultation about the future of the Lliw Valley, provisionally allocated to the new Carmarthenshire and the boundaries between the councils in the Valleys and the Vale of Glamorgan.

After Mr Hunt's announcement in the Commons, Barry Jones, the shadow Welsh secretary, accused the government of timing the statement "to throw dust in the eyes of the people of Wales and prevent them from seeing the real issues". He said the plan would divide district councils from county councils and would add further expense to "the ruinously expensive failure by the Conservatives" following the last local government reorganisation in Wales in 1973-4.



Leigh: guarantees for the package holidaymaker

Moves to protect tourists

By Roger Wood
Parliamentary Editor

FINANCIAL safeguards for package holidaymakers are being proposed by the government to ensure that tourists are not stranded abroad if their tour operators go bust.

Under the proposals announced yesterday by Edward Leigh, the consumer affairs minister, tour operators would be compelled to provide financial guarantees for repatriation and also to refund any prepayments in the event of insolvency.

Mr Leigh was responding to an EC directive on package travel which member states are required to implement by the end of the year. He announced in a written answer that the government had changed its mind after consultation with the travel industry about an earlier proposal to establish a licensing authority.

The Association of British Travel Agents said yesterday that it welcomed the proposals and was looking forward to taking part in detailed discussions.

Major refuses to set Trident limits

By Philip Webster and John Winder

THE Trident missile system could carry fewer than 512 warheads, but it would be irresponsible for the government to commit itself in advance to a lower figure, the prime minister has said.

Labour seized on his statement, in a letter to Gerald Kaufman, the shadow foreign secretary, to accuse the government of continuing confusion in its policy towards Trident.

Last month Tom King, the defence secretary, acknowledged the possibility that the Trident system could even carry fewer than the total of 192 missiles on Polaris, which it is replacing. But his deputy Alan Clark, the defence procurement minister, suggested that this limit would mean "uncertainties."

In response to Mr Kaufman's claim that the policy was a shambles, Mr Major said the government had always said that each Trident would carry no more than 128 warheads. That, he said, was a maximum, not a rigid specification.

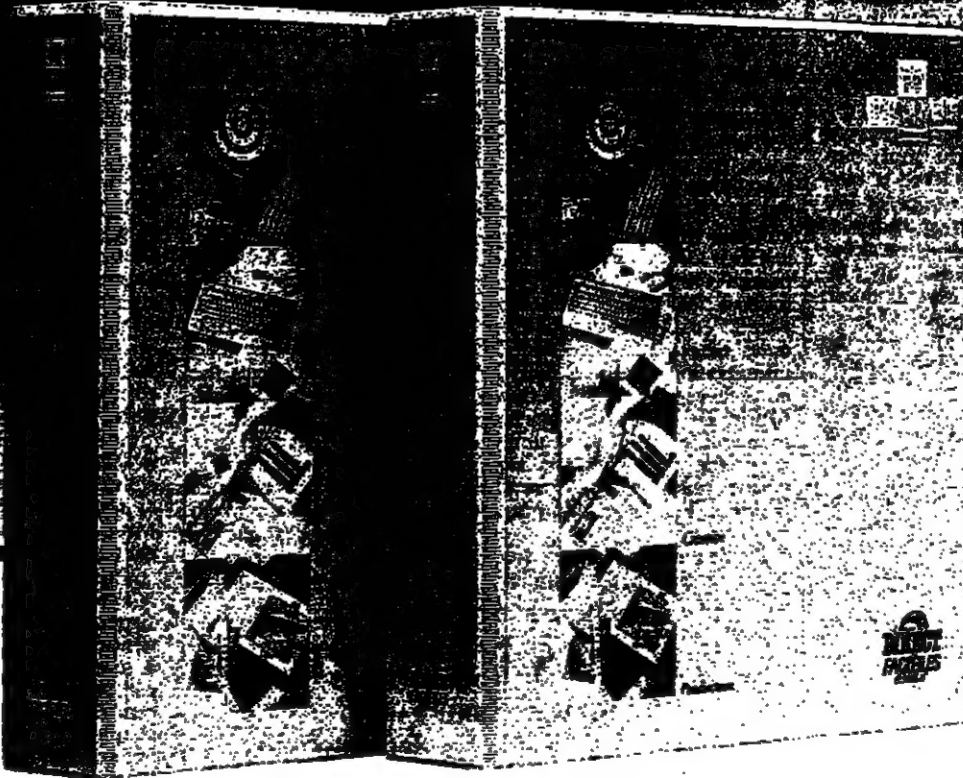
"It is entirely consistent with this to say that the exact number of warheads required to ensure minimum deter-

rence could be fewer than 128 per boat, he said. "The Trident system will give us the flexibility to tailor the size of our nuclear deterrent to the conditions facing us in the decades ahead. What would be irresponsible would be to decide in advance to limit ourselves to a lower figure."

Mr King told the Commons yesterday that there was no military support for the suggestion that Britain could maintain a submarine patrol with two Trident boats. Labour would have a "rough time" if it held to its view that the system should have only three boats rather than the four proposed by the government.

No senior officers believed that one could maintain a deterrent with fewer than four submarines, Mr King said. No senior naval officer would support the Labour candidate for Barrow who had suggested that the fourth Trident, about to be built, should be turned into a 17-tonne sub-sea support vessel. He said later that the cost of the Trident programme would be nearer 2.5 per cent than 3 per cent of the total defence budget.

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Clarke defends record on adult education

By Arthur Leathley

KENNETH Clarke last night accused the Opposition of whipping up unnecessary fears about the future of adult education. The education secretary, defending the government's record, said that the numbers in further education colleges alone had increased by 50 per cent and

27 per cent in the enrolment of adults.

"We do not want to repeat the shocking record of the last Labour government, when spending went down in real terms. Under this government, for ten years, further and adult education of all kinds have been expanded and the purpose of the bill is to expand on that."

The debate was on a Labour clause, moved by Derek Fatchett, to provide for an annual report on adult education to be made by the education secretary.

Mr Fatchett said the clause was also to ensure that adult education provision was secure. They were looking for a way to limit the damage to adult education caused by the Conservatives.

Local authorities had no statutory responsibility for adult education. The government kept offering sweet words but did not offer security. The bill was being debated against a "backcloth of anxiety" and he challenged the government to adopt the new clause, which would ensure that annual reports on the provision of adult education were submitted to Parliament.



Clarke: accused Labour of whipping up fears there were approaching 1,500,000 enrolments a year.

The Further and Higher Education Bill, which MPs were debating, was expressly intended to expand adult education opportunities, said. The past ten years had seen an increase of

Bosnia leader warns Serbs to respect vote verdict

FROM TIM JUDAH IN SARAJEVO

ALIA Izetbegovic, the Bosnian president, yesterday threatened to call out hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets of Sarajevo if Serb militants ever attempted to blockade its streets again.

Mr Izetbegovic was speaking hours after barricades manned by Serbian gunmen had been dismantled and life in the Bosnian capital began to return to normal. The president said an agreement signed between the Bosnian presidency and Serb representatives on Monday had given no significant concessions to the Serbs. He also said that the events of the past few days, which cost at least four lives, had been carefully planned to delay international recognition of an independent Bosnia.

Mr Izetbegovic's words drew an angry response from Bijana Plavic, a senior Serb leader. She said that if there was no agreement on Bosnia's future within the next few months the republic could be partitioned by Croatia and Serbia and that a small Muslim buffer state would be left in the middle.

Over the weekend Bosnians voted in a referendum on independence which, according to the latest figures, was approved by almost 63% of the electorate. While Muslims and Croats, who together make up two thirds of the population, voted overwhelmingly in favour, most Serbs headed their leaders' call to boycott the poll. Last November Serbs voted in their own referendum to stay in Yugoslavia.

Bosnia, which was under Turkish rule for almost 500

years, has never been an independent state, but it has often been a source of turbulence in European history, most notably in 1914 when a Bosnian Serb nationalist assassinated the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, providing the spark for the first world war.

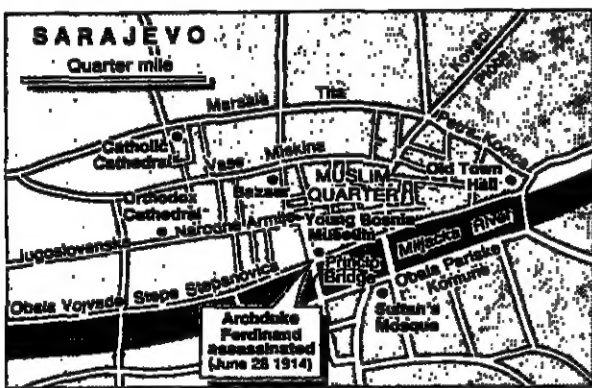
The assassination took place half a mile from the spot where on Saturday a Serb was gunned down at his son's wedding, provoking the latest violence.

Mr Izetbegovic's accusations that the barricades had been planned was denounced by Mrs Plavic who claimed they had been thrown up spontaneously. She said that any suggestion to the contrary, including the idea that the shooting which gave rise to them had also been staged was "a monstrous idea".

She also said that the Serbs had only taken down their barricades because they had achieved their aims. Foremost among these was a pledge that Bosnia's referendum would not affect the outcome of European Community-sponsored talks on the future of the republic.

Despite Mrs Plavic's insistence that the barricades had not been planned, gunmen on the barricades were communicating by walkie-talkie and they openly said that they were acting on orders from Serb leaders. And while both Mr Izetbegovic and Mrs Plavic both said yesterday that they thought Bosnians could resolve their differences peacefully there is no sign that any real compromise is in the air.

Roger Boyes, page 12



UK video firm has Gorbachev taped

BY MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

MIKHAIL Gorbachev has sold the exclusive worldwide television and video rights to his life story to a British independent production company best-known for making pop videos.

Proceeds from the four-part television series, which has yet to be sold to any broadcaster, will be put towards the former Soviet president's new Moscow-based foundation, launched yesterday. Mr Gorbachev will receive slightly less than 25 per cent of the profits from the deal, which also covers worldwide video, radio, book publication and newspaper serialisation rights.

Filming of the \$4 million documentary, in which the former Soviet president will talk candidly about his political views, experiences and personal triumphs and traumas, starts in July when cameras will catch Mr Gorbachev during his holiday by the Black Sea.

But Directors International, who announced the deal yesterday, will not be able to start filming until they have pre-sold the series to a broadcaster. John Cairns, the executive producer admitted yesterday. Negotiations were proceeding with the BBC, ITV, American networks and Italian media magnate Silvio Berlusconi.

"Gorbachev has agreed to speak on everything... personal and political," said Mr Cairns, who won the rights after almost 18 months of negotiations. Mr Cairns said he first made contact with Mr Gorbachev by arranging to get Muhammad Ali, the subject of another documentary being made by his company, to present the former Soviet leader with the Martin Luther King peace award in Washington 18 months ago. "Subsequently," his advisers visited our production facility in New York and were impressed by our sophisticated computerised editing techniques," Mr Cairns added. Mr Cairns insisted that al-

though Mr Gorbachev was "a partner" in the project, Directors International would retain creative control. He said Mr Gorbachev would not be interviewed as a "has-been" politician. "In my view he is still a politician and will have influence over events in the former Soviet Union," he said.

The series will include extensive interviews with Mr Gorbachev, tracing his development from childhood in a farming community during the Stalin era, his political rise and fall. The filmmakers will be granted unprecedented access to extensive archive material as well as Mr Gorbachev's personal files.

Due to be shown in 1993, the series will also include interviews with world leaders, Gorbachev's wife Raisa and other members of his family.

Diary, page 12



No U-turn: an inhabitant of Vilnius making the victory sign yesterday to celebrate that a long column of vehicles carrying troops of the former Soviet Union was driving out of the Lithuanian capital towards Russia.

The withdrawal finally got under way more than 50 years after Soviet troops occupied the country. A farewell ceremony, held under fluttering Russian flags at the Minsk air base, was attended by military lead-

ers and Lithuanian officials. Troops will leave their families behind in Lithuania until accommodation is provided for them. "I hope that I will see my wife again soon," one officer said. (Reuter)

Moldavia troops in new clash

FROM ROBERT SEELY IN DUBOVSARY

AT LEAST two people were killed and ten injured yesterday in a day of fierce fighting between Moldavian troops and separatist fighters, including Russian Cossacks in the self-proclaimed Dnestr mini-republic.

Forces from the Moldavian interior ministry and national guard attacked a barracks held by troops of the Commonwealth of Independent States and seized thousands of rounds of ammunition and several dozen automatic weapons.

By yesterday afternoon the fighting had spread to roads around the town of Dubovsary. Moldavian Omon troops also positioned themselves on bridges across the river Dnestr. Russian and Ukrainian separatists tried to build blockades around the town square and to move the few armoured personnel carriers in their possession into a position to repel a Moldavian attack.

Dnestr leaders, who declared independence from the Moldavian republic last year before the disintegration of the Soviet Union, said that an "invasion" by Moldavian troops was inevitable. The Moldavians say the nationalists of Dnestr are bandits.

The gun battles began in the early hours of yesterday around the barracks in a suburb of Dubovsary after a Moldavian national guardman tried to disarm soldiers at the barracks, which house a Commonwealth civil defence unit. At least 20 soldiers of the 120 there decided to resist, supported by local Russian and Ukrainian paramilitary organisations and Cossack units.

Italian parties challenged by flamboyant outsiders

BELEAGUERED traditional parties in Italy face their biggest challenge in decades tomorrow as the country's election campaign opens officially, contested by a constellation of flamboyant anti-establishment candidates.

In all, 116 different party symbols championed by 11,000 candidates will appear on ballot papers during the April 5 vote. Christian Democrats, Socialists and the (former Communist) Democratic Party of the Left are most vulnerable to setbacks in the north. The Lega Nord umbrella group is campaigning for a radical devolution of power to a provocatively named "Republic of the North" that would collect most taxes, introduce anti-immigration measures similar to those proposed by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the French National Front leader, and allow the richer regions to decide much of their own policy on European Community issues.

Political experts believe the Lega Nord and the parallel

Italy's elections will be contested by 116 parties and 11,000 candidates, writes John Phillips from Rome

Lega Centro and Lega Sud are unlikely to obtain the target of 10 per cent of the national vote set by the charismatic league leader, Senator Umberto Bossi. However, observers predict the leagues could win up to 50 of the 630 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. In Lombardy the Lega Lombarda is expected to be neck and neck with the Christian Democrats, mustering between 20 and 30 per cent. The league effect means the Christian Democrats are unlikely to match their national score of 34 per cent at the last election in 1987.

Voters in central Italy and the southern Mezzogiorno are less concerned about the impact of Rome government bureaucracy on the economy

Gardens to go green

FROM REUTER IN PARIS

THE Tuilleries Gardens in Paris, so long neglected that they have become little more than a dustbowl flanked by sick trees, are undergoing a 250-million franc (£25.5 million) facelift to restore their historical glory.

Jack Lang, the French culture minister, announced the project yesterday, promising a return to the splendour that the gardens enjoyed in the days of Louis XIV in the 17th century. Three leading landscape architects are working with I.M. Pei, the man in charge of renovating

the nearby Louvre museum. The project is due for completion in 1995.

"We shall be leaving the main avenues, ponds and terraces as they were originally intended, while adding new touches to live up to the back of the garden near the Louvre," M. Lang said.

The Tuilleries Gardens, stretching from the Louvre to the Place de la Concorde, are one of the most popular tourist sights in Paris but also one of the sorriest. The chestnut and lime trees are dying, and the flower beds are empty.

Azeris prepare to attack as last troops leave

FROM ANATOL LIEVEN IN AGDAM

As Azeris chant songs of mourning that are also calls for revenge for the massacre of their relatives, Azeri reinforcements are moving into the town of Agdam. They seem to be intended to take part in an offensive into Nagorno-Karabakh as soon as the military withdrawal from the region by the former Soviet Union is completed.

In the past three days, Western journalists here have seen four heavily armed units of Azeri troops move through Agdam, including two battle tanks and at least 20 light tanks and armoured personnel carriers. Over their heads yesterday, moving in the opposite direction, was a stream of military helicopters from the Commonwealth of Independent States helping to evacuate the 366th Motorised Infantry Regiment stationed in Stepanakert.

A second Commonwealth motorised infantry unit, sent on Sunday from the main Commonwealth military base Ganja, is encamped near Agdam. It is apparently intended to help to escort the Stepanakert garrison through an Azeri population that is convinced that the troops helped in the Armenian capture of Hodjali a week ago and the subsequent massacre.

Tension between the Commonwealth forces and the Azeri authorities is high. At the police commander's office, which also serves as the Azeri military headquarters here, I saw a confrontation yesterday between Colonel Rashid Mahmedov, the police commander, and a Commonwealth captain. Colonel Mahmedov refused to let the captain's armed escort enter the building with him, and at one point yelled that his men would open fire if they did so.

When I first came to Agdam, almost a month ago, there was little

sign that it lay on the edge of a steadily worsening conflict. Now Armenian bombardments have destroyed houses and pockmarked the streets, and the town is full of men carrying rocket-propelled grenade launchers and machine guns.

Nevertheless, it is by no means clear that the Azeris are ready to launch an offensive. Their forces are divided into many groups split along political lines and recognising different commanders. The armed police who still make up an important part of the forces are under the authority of President Mutalibov and, theoretically at least, are the national army "battalions" — a "battalion" being a unit that is supposed to consist of 500 men but in fact rarely numbers more than a few dozen.

The many armed volunteers, however, drawn from the popular front or even more radical nationalist parties, are bitterly hostile to President Mutalibov. They blame him for his communist past, for his supposed role in the bloody Soviet military intervention in Baku in January 1990, his failure to take "decisive action" in Nagorno-Karabakh, and supposed general subservience to the Moscow authorities.

Senior Lieutenant Shahin Tagiev, commander of a "battalion" drawn from the radical National Salvation party, said yesterday that "the Azeri people will kill Mutalibov for what he has done". He added, however, that he recognised the authority of General Dadash Rzaev, the government-appointed local commander.

Yesterday, Armenia accused Azerbaijan of shooting down an Mi26 military helicopter carrying mainly women and children near Kelbadzhar. There was no information about any casualties.

Letters, page 13

UK urges Russia to aid enclave

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

BRITAIN is urging Russia to play a more active role in trying to halt the fighting in the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, and believes that other nations should lead support to Russian efforts instead of trying to mount peace missions of their own.

Douglas Hogg, the junior minister at the Foreign Office, is going next week to Moscow, Baku and Yerevan for talks on the conflict. Britain believes the Russians, with Commonwealth forces in the area, have by far the greatest influence and should be supported by the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), which sent a fact-finding mission that reported to a meeting in Prague last week.

Britain views as counterproductive overlapping efforts by Iran and Turkey to mediate. "It's a mess," one official said. "There are too many people all trying to promote peace proposals." He said the CSCE mission drew up a ceasefire, an exchange of prisoners, and guarantees of minority rights.

Hungary lays to rest past sins

Budapest: Hungary's constitutional court laid to rest the country's communist past by striking down a controversial new law which would have allowed prosecution and trials for "crimes committed in the name of communism" (Ernest Beck writes).

In a landmark judicial ruling that could have repercussions for other east European countries considering legal action against alleged collaborators, the court said that "both legal and human rights" would be violated if laws are made today to punish people for crimes carried out decades ago under a different legal system. "It is the former system, and not individuals, which is guilty," the chief judge noted.

Honecker move

Moscow: The former East German communist leader, Erich Honecker left hospital in Moscow after undergoing medical examinations and apparently returned to the Chilean embassy where he has been given refuge since December. (Reuter)

Prague accord

Geneva: Czechoslovakia and the seven nations of the European Free Trade Association initialled a free trade agreement intended to help integrate the former communist country into the Western economy. (Reuter)

Express crash

Moscow: The Riga-Moscow express and a freight train collided and caught fire west of Moscow, killing at least 11 people, officials said. Fifteen people were hurt and taken to hospital, six of them in serious condition. (Reuter)

Phone ruling

Madrid: In the first test case of its kind in Spain, a judge has ruled that it was an illegal invasion of privacy for a journalist to publish details of a two-way car telephone conversations he had picked up on a radio.

Sex sentence

Angoulême: The owner of a French transport company was sentenced to three months in jail and fined 50,000 francs (£5,000) for sexually harassing one of his female employees. (AP)

Becker love match inflames Nazi desire for master race

FROM IAN MURRAY IN BONN

BARBARA Feltus-Ferbst is a young television actress who stirs strong and very different emotions in two young Germans. One is Boris Becker, the national tennis idol. The other is Ewald Althaus, a public relations adviser, who is the hope of the German far-right.

"Babsi" is black, the daughter of a coloured former GI and his German wife. She has been the three-times Wimbledon champion's girl friend since the end of last year. Because of her Herr Becker has become the subject of personal abuse by racists, who have shouted "Go back to the bush, you black witch" at the couple. This experience is a key reason why he refused to sponsor Berlin's attempt to host the Olympics in 2000.

"There are lots of neo-Nazi groups now in Germany," he told *The Mail on Sunday*. "If we were to win lots of medals at our own Olympics some people would not take it correctly. They might start talking about the master race again and that's dangerous."

Herr Althaus, aged 25, has no doubts about German pre-eminence and the inferiority of any foreigners. He whips up feeling against them using ranting oratory to rouse a skinhead audience. He became a devotee of Hitler at the age of 13. At 17 he moved in with radicals, who sent him once a week for lessons in rhetoric and philosophy with Willi Kramer, a department head under Josef Goebbels. Since the death from AIDS

last year of Michael Kühnen, the most prominent of neo-Nazi's, the far-right has been searching for an inspiring figurehead. Increasingly extremists are looking to Herr Althaus.

A businessman, he works from high-class offices in an area preferred by lawyers and accountants, handing out business cards for his company, Althaus Distribution and Publicity, making calls on his portable telephone and handling enquiries in German, French or English. A photograph of Hitler adorns the wall of his office. In the cellar are stacks of Nazi literature. He sells volumes of paintings by Hitler for 80 marks (£28) and propaganda which extols the Third Reich. Sales

are his main income and he claims his annual budget is 600,000 marks.

He whips up supporters at rallies using techniques learnt from Herr Kramer. With enough beers inside them, he hopes his audience will be inspired to go on the rampage. "If the boys didn't kick up a row, nobody would bother listening to me," he said in a recent interview.

To build up his power base he trains *Starkalter* (governors) to run right-wing activities in different towns. He likes to be called the "German Sacharov" and takes pride in the fact that he is universally disliked.

Herr Althaus does not get involved in any violence himself. He leaves that to others but, he admitted: "I am dangerous. I know that."



Focus of the far-right's attention: Becker's girl friend, Barbara Feltus-Ferbst

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Date Daytime telephone number
(useful if there is a query)

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President seeks to woo conservatives as primary pace heats up

Bush admits breaking tax pledge was worst error

FROM PETER STOTHARD, US EDITOR, IN ATLANTA

PRESIDENT Bush made a last-minute bid for conservative votes yesterday by confessing that the breach of his "read my lips: no new taxes" pledge was the worst mistake of his presidency.

As voters delivered their verdict on the biggest election day of the 1992 campaign so far, Mr Bush said that the 1990 tax increase had brought him "political grief" and that, if he had his time again, he would not repeat the error. "The compromise wasn't worth it," he said because the problems "overwhelmed" the benefits of public spending controls.

At an eve-of-poll rally in Marietta, Georgia, Patrick Buchanan, the Republican

rating" fell to new low of 40 per cent yesterday, was on the defensive for most of the Georgia campaign.

His supporters attacked Mr Buchanan's opposition to the Iraq war and tried to portray him as a fake conservative who was "flirting with fascism". But the president himself remained above the fray, apologising for mistakes and promising that he would do better when the improved climate overseas allowed him to concentrate on domestic policy.

The Buchanan camp's best hope of winning him was in attracting white rural Democrats who, under Georgia rules, could choose to vote in the Republican primary. Mr Buchanan made a bid of his own for these votes yesterday, criticising civil rights laws designed to promote the election of black officials.

The Democrats held four primaries yesterday, in Georgia, Colorado, Maryland and Utah. Chief interest lay in whether Paul Tsongas could win Colorado and Maryland, states far from his home base in Massachusetts, and whether Bill Clinton could win well enough in Georgia to prove that he has put his personal problems behind him.

From today the Republican campaign moves to South Carolina, a Bush stronghold, which votes on Saturday with former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke on the ballot for the first time. The biggest test is on March 10, when Mr Tsongas and Mr Clinton will clash in Florida for the first time on equal terms and Mr Bush will expect a convincing Texan snub to Mr Buchanan.



challenger, kept up the attacks on Mr Bush's "tax-and-spend" policies which have helped his popularity to soar. "Read my lips: no second term," he told supporters.

Maryland, Colorado and Georgia held Republican primaries yesterday to select 131 delegates for the party's presidential nominating convention in August. Mr Buchanan made Georgia the main battlefield, launching economic assaults and an extraordinary television campaign against the Bush administration's subsidy of homosexual and anti-religious art. Mr Bush, whose national "approval



Small talk: Bill Clinton, looking for victory on the Democratic campaign trail in Columbus, Georgia, meeting a toddler who appears overawed by the American way of democracy. Georgia was one of several states voting in primary elections yesterday

Cousin Theodora masterminds Tsongas kitchen campaign

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN DENVER, COLORADO

WHEN Paul Tsongas, the Democratic contender, made America chuckle by declaring for president last April, practically the only person he knew in Colorado was his cousin Theodora, an environmental health scientist and complete political novice. Would she deliver him Colorado, he asked? "I'll try," she replied. "It's not every day of the week that a cousin runs for president."

Standing shyly amid senators, congressmen and other Democratic luminaries during a reception at the governor's mansion last weekend, Miss Tsongas admitted that at first she "did not know what to do". She gave up her job. She studied her cousin's bite-the-bullet economic prescriptions. She began forcing herself to speak in public, and for the next eight months this small, middle-aged woman with thick glasses was the extent of her cousin's presidential campaign in Colorado, operating from the kitchen of her little Denver home.

The publicity that followed Mr Tsongas's famous New Hampshire victory two weeks ago changed everything. She returned home two nights later to find 96 messages on her answering machine. Donations began to flow in and scores of volunteers suddenly materialised. Mr Tsongas's ratings shot up, from 4 per cent, to 27 per cent as he leapfrogged over Bill Clinton, his rival for the nomination. "Oh, wow," she exclaimed. "He's really going to do it."

If the last-minute opinion polls were correct, Miss Tsongas should indeed have delivered Colorado to her cousin in yesterday's primary, though both Mr Clinton and Jerry Brown, the former California governor, were still in strong contention. The former Massachusetts senator was also favoured to win Maryland and possibly Washington state yesterday, leaving Mr Clinton with the consolation prize of Georgia.

Number of delegates at stake in summer conventions:
Democrat 4,287 Republican 2,209

Yesterday's state primaries with delegate number at stake (Democrat figure excludes small number of "superdelegates" who go to convention uncommitted) and 1988's results:

● Colorado 47 Dem, 37 Rep
1988: Michael Dukakis won Dem caucus with 42 per cent; George Bush won Rep contest (76%)
● Georgia 76 Dem, 52 Rep
1988: Jesse Jackson won Dem primary (40%); Bush won Rep primary (54%)
● Maryland 67 Dem, 42 Rep
1988: Dukakis won Dem primary (46%); Bush won Rep primary (53%)
● Utah (Dem primary only today), 23 Dem
1988: Dukakis won caucus (72%)

Yesterday's state caucuses with delegate number at stake (Dem figure excludes "superdelegates") and 1988 results

● Minnesota 78 Dem, 32 Rep
1988: Dukakis won Dem caucus (53%); Robert Dole won Rep caucus (42%)
● Washington state 71 Dem, 35 Rep
1988: Dukakis won Dem caucus (44%); Pat Robertson won Rep caucus (39%)
● Idaho (Dem caucus only) 18 Dem
1988: Dukakis won (38%)

There is also a Democratic caucus today in American Samoa to select six delegates, each with a half-vote at convention

UN team strikes at Iraqi gas stocks

FROM LEON BARKHO IN BAGHDAD

WHILE Iraq and the United Nations bicker over scrapping Baghdad's arms industry, UN experts are destroying the feared chemical weapons which President Saddam Hussein threatened to use during the 42-day Gulf war but never fired.

"We have successfully managed to blow up 75 leaking nerve-gas rockets without any detrimental impact on the environment or the people living in the vicinity," said Michel Desgranges, the Frenchman who heads the 26-man team carrying out the hazardous task.

"We began our work by destroying five rockets, then ten, and so on," he said. "We want to verify at each stage that what we are doing is completely safe."

Mr Desgranges's mission is going smoothly, in contrast to that of a team of ballistic experts which left Baghdad at the weekend after failing to get permission to destroy material it said was for modifying missiles. That incident led to fresh condemnation of Iraq by the security council.

Mr Desgranges, satisfied with the destruction process,

has now decided to increase the number of rockets to be destroyed every day. "From today, we will destroy a maximum of 40 per day and hope to finish our task within eight to nine days," he said.

His team started exploding the rockets on February 25 at Khamsayrah, close to the southern city of Nasiriyah. They have established a three-mile wide security zone to protect the environment and the people living in the vicinity. The site designated by the UN for the destruction of Iraq's chemical, ballistic and nuclear weapons is Muthana, 80 miles northwest of Baghdad, but M Desgranges said it was too risky to move the leaking rockets there.

"Their transportation would have been hazardous to the environment and the people en route," he said.

Mr Desgranges said that relations with the Iraqis have been "normal and reasonable. Everything is going according to plan." He said his team's success would make it easier for other UN experts to start destroying stocks of mustard gas and other substances at Muthana. (Reuters)

Begin in critical condition

Jerusalem: Menachem Begin, the only Israeli prime minister to sign a peace treaty with an Arab country, was yesterday in a critical condition on a hospital respirator. Dan Michaeli, the director of the Ichilov hospital in Tel Aviv, said Mr Begin, aged 78, "most probably had a heart attack". Blood had temporarily stopped flowing to Mr Begin's brain, which might cause brain damage.

The former Likud prime minister, a hardliner who made peace with Egypt in 1979 and won the Nobel peace prize, has suffered from heart trouble and spent long periods in hospital. (Reuters)

Algeria penalty

Algiers: Algerian authorities condemned three Muslim Hezbollahi party extremists to death for murder and kidnapping, as a court prepared to rule on whether to ban the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front. (Reuters)

Unesco mission

Paris: Unesco, the UN culture agency, acknowledged that it has sent an unannounced mission to Iraq to study how it could participate in "humanitarian assistance" but said that it did not break UN sanctions. (Reuters)

Keating boost

Sydney: Two polls indicated a sharp rise in support — of six to 16 percentage points — for Paul Keating, the Australian prime minister, after he had attacked Britain and released his plans for economic regeneration. (AFP)

Children suffer

Paris: Half the world's 17 million refugees are children, the UN Children's Fund said, and they suffer huge mortality rates — as high as 300 per 1,000 among Sudanese refugees. Unicef spent £19 million in 1990. (AFP)

Bus deaths

Dhaka: At least 35 people were killed and 42 missing after a bus skidded over a bridge into a river near Nilphamari in northern Bangladesh.

Castro recalls nuclear peril

Pascal Fletcher in Havana looks at Castro's version of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis

entirety by Cuban television.

The 65-year-old Cuban leader exchanged impressions with other missile crisis veterans from the United States and the former Soviet Union. He said he remembered both President Kennedy and Nikita Khrushchev as men of courage.

His testimony addressed an allegation made by Khrushchev in memoirs published in 1990 that President Castro had urged Moscow to launch a pre-emptive nuclear strike against the United States. Cuban media had said Khrushchev misinterpreted a message sent by the Cuban leader in October 1962.

President Castro told the Havana conference he was

convinced at the time that a US invasion of Cuba would have triggered a nuclear conflict. Under those circumstances, the Cuban leadership was in favour of using tactical nuclear weapons. This was the essence of his message to Khrushchev.

The Soviet Union deployed 42,000 troops in Cuba armed with 36 nuclear warheads for use with R-12 intermediate-range ballistic missiles. It also deployed nine Lina tactical missiles with nuclear warheads to be used against a US invasion force. At the time, President Kennedy was advised by the Central Intelligence Agency that there were no tactical nuclear warheads on the island and only 10,000 Soviet troops.

Another disclosure made at the Havana conference by General Anatoly Gribkov, former director of operations of the Soviet High Command, was that Soviet commanders in Cuba were authorised to use the tactical weapons at their discretion against a US attack. (Reuters)

Africans press for trade in elephants

FROM JOANNA PITMAN IN KYOTO

A RIFT opened yesterday between four southern African nations and the rest of the world over a proposal to allow the killing and trading of controlled numbers of animals belonging to endangered species. The main animal affected would be the African elephant.

The proposal, tabled by Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia and Malawi on the first day of debate at the eighth session of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species in Kyoto, is intended to force drastic changes in the convention's basic principles, giving greater control over conservation methods to the nations that "own the animals".

"We in southern Africa cannot wait any longer. Southern Africa is choking to death. We need to trade in wildlife," Niko Bessinger, the wildlife, conservation and

tourism minister for Namibia, said. Mr Bessinger argues that the African elephant is no longer endangered and that a controlled level of trade, maintaining the elephant population at sustainable levels, would be beneficial in the long run because poor African nations would be able to plough their commercial gains back into more effective methods of conservation.

The issue, which is expected to dominate the conference, brought heated debate. Positions were taken disclosing polarisation between North and South; between rich and poor nations.

"Conservation by external bodies is an archaic form of imperialism, a scientific and new form of colonialism," Marshall Murphree, a member of the Zimbabwe delegation, said. "The patronising North maintains that protection is best achieved through a combination of legislation and technocracy. It views the South as technologically backward, administratively inept and fundamentally corrupt. The real managers of wildlife can only be those who live with that wildlife."

Delegations from Britain, America and the European Community threw their weight behind a move for cautious reappraisal and study of the proposal, fearful that an outright rejection could prompt the four African nations to leave the conference and start trading outside the convention.

If working committees do not produce conclusions on the proposal by the time the conference ends on Friday week, the proposal is likely to remain buried until the next conference in three years' time. Some argue that that would be precisely the result desired by the richer countries of the North.

The four southern African nations argue that the increase in the number of Nile crocodiles from a few hundred to 80,000 since trading was allowed and ranching started indicates that a similar effect might be seen with the elephant if the trade ban is lifted.

Science pursues survival of the man-cat

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN CAIRO

THE riddle of how to preserve the crumbling 4,600-year-old Sphinx remained unresolved yesterday at the conclusion of the first international conference of scientific experts called by the Egyptian government to plan its rescue.

As the enigmatic man-cat sat brooding in the desert a few hundred yards away, half covered in ugly scaffolding and surrounded by scores of pollution-spreading coaches, the scientists meeting in the historic Meina House Hotel failed to agree on ways to save the monument or even how long it could last.

Bahy Isawi, an Egyptian geologist, claimed that the Sphinx and the pyramids it guards would completely disappear after 100,000 years if present climatic conditions continued. But other experts dismissed his assessment as hopelessly optimistic during the often heated closed-door sessions. Even the ministerial press

conference to announce recommendations was delayed by nearly an hour because of heavy traffic on the road out to the Sphinx at Giza. Experts allege that car pollution has caused it to suffer more damage in the past 50 years than in the previous 50 centuries.



Goodbye to chips: experts are divided over whether to conserve or restore the Sphinx

"There was no agreement on the technical means to save the monument," said Barry Stow, a British expert invited to address the conference. "The only consensus was that the primary cause of the Sphinx's problems is man rather than nature."

The statue was restored both in ancient Egyptian and in Roman times, but lay buried until Napoleon Bonaparte ordered it uncovered during a French expedition to Egypt in 1798, a feat finally accomplished 57 years later.

Farouk Hosni, the minister of culture, and his officials were repeatedly pressed as to why so much traffic was still permitted in the environs of the Sphinx. Zahi Hawass, director of the Giza Plateau, claimed that measures were underway to have the vehicles and the camel drivers who mob tourists removed to a safe distance.

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• Britain's biggest ego
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Deceived by dubious diets

James Le Fanu is sceptical about a trendy Mediterranean food fad

When, in the early 1950s, Elizabeth David told her friends she was heading South to find some interesting recipes for a book, they could not have been more discouraging. "All that pasta," they said: "we have enough stodge here already, you won't find much else." Their prejudices accurately reflected those of the great Mrs Beeton. "The Italians — with the exception of the macaroni — have no specially characteristic article of food."

Had Mrs David asked the advice of the nutritionists of the time, they would have been equally damning. "Everyone" knew that the central pillars of a healthy diet were meat, milk and dairy products — collectively known as "protective foods" because they protected against ill health. You only had to look at the Italians to see how bad their diet must be: all that oil made their skin greasy, while their vast intake of pasta explained why they were small and fat.

Luckily for us, Mrs David took no notice, and the result of her labours *Mediterranean Food*, reckoning with the "warm, rich, stimulating smells of genuine food", transformed the landscape of cooking forever.

Now nutritional, as well as gastronomic, fashion has caught up with her. Last year after examining the scientific evidence about the causes of chronic diseases in the West and their growing prevalence in developing countries, the World Health Organisation delivered its verdict. Everyone, north, south, east and west, should shift to a Mediterranean-style diet.

The organisation's Professor Philip James urged the universal adoption of the "peasant diet", based on simple unrefined foods with a lot of pasta and fish, fruit and unsaturated oil. Mrs David's successors at the Guild of Food Writers have taken up the cause with zeal, and the Channel 4 programme *Food File* tonight makes the point. British food is lamentable, the Mediterranean diet (bean soup poured out over crusty brown bread, washed down with a couple of glasses of wine) is delicious. Then some talking heads pop up to tell us that "everyone knows" that the hard saturated fats in meat and dairy products fur up the arteries, causing heart attacks, not to mention "half of all cancers".

All this sounds plausible enough until one starts examining it. It is well known that international organisations such as WHO have a penchant for drawing up grandiose plans to save the world, but is it not slightly too utopian to suggest that everyone should be eating the same sort of food?

Then, the "Mediterranean diet", which purportedly explains the good health of the peoples of that region is certainly not synonymous with WHO's "peasant diet" — indeed it positively bristles with supposedly unhealthy food. Andalusian breakfast starts with full cream milk and chocolate, followed by toasted white bread

covered with goose fat washed down with a double brandy and terminated with a cigarette. The southern French certainly eat a lot of fish, but no proper meal can be considered complete unless there is also meat daube, lamb with garlic or roast duck. Salt is ubiquitous — in salads (handfuls of it), charcuterie, anchovies and cheese. The Arabic influence in southern Spain and Italy is reflected in the popularity of sickly sweet cakes and biscuits.

Nor, one might add, is the evidence compelling that the Mediterraneanans are that much healthier. They live no longer than people from northern climes. Certainly heart disease is rarer, but so is lung cancer, despite massive cigarette consumption. They simply die of other things. Indeed the major characteristic of the diet and health debate in the past few years has been increasing uncertainty, which makes it odd that WHO should use its authority to assert the contrary.

The simple, earthy peasant diet of southern Italy is indeed wonderful, but the joy of food lies in its diversity. So to argue that it alone holds the key to good health is, well, a bit fishy.

Whenever simple solutions — especially dietary ones — are presented as the answer to complex matters of health and illness, it is a fair bet that somewhere a single issue campaigner is lurking, and so it turns out.

It is no secret that a few people have been particularly vocal on food issues in recent years. Their profile may be lower than it was, but this is only because of a shift in tactics towards promoting their views by the methods developed by the left over the past few decades. Their names are to be found behind front organisations with worthy sounding titles like "Parents For Safe Food" and "The Food Additive Campaign Team". They are particularly influential in the Guild of Food Writers, whose journal is a platform for their opinions. They set up a broad front organisation "The National Food Alliance", co-opting respectable organisations such as the Women's Farmers Union. They have set up a parliamentary "Food and Health Forum" to disseminate their ideas to those with influence.

Their driving animus is a quasi-religious belief in the harm done by the "Western diet" and hostility to the food industry. Their aims are interventionist: to persuade government to set up a joint ministry of food and health to promote their version of nutritional wisdom and compel farmers and food producers to fall into line.

The beauty of campaigning in favour of a "Mediterranean diet for all" is that it implicitly condemns native British cooking as unhealthy. Where, in this brave new world of dietary uniformity is there space for Mrs David's croquette de cervelle (calf brains, egg, flour and butter) or casouela (pork sausages, bacon fat, butter, wine and vegetables)?



Elizabeth David: inspired a generation of cooks

Sarajevo, the city which sparked the great war, is threatened by conflict again, says Roger Boyes

Haunted by the past

Two dainty footprints etched into a Sarajevo pavement mark the place where Gavrilo Princip stood to shoot Archduke Franz Ferdinand and began the first world war. Today, armed Muslim "green berets" man a road-block near Princip Bridge, and Bosnia is again only two steps from war.

Transistor radio sets blare in the bazaar and the cafes as the Bosnians wait for war. The noises yesterday were mainly soothing: the dismantling of some barricades, reassurances to the Serbs who see no future in an independent Bosnia. Nobody in Sarajevo needs to be reminded that war in Bosnia would, in the words of the Serbian writer Vuk Draskovic, "mire our country in blood up to its knees". And Princip's footsteps show how war in Bosnia can easily lead to a Balkan and ultimately European conflict.

The Bosnian leadership of President Alija Izetbegovic is based on shrewd coalition politics and is motivated by the simple desire to avoid being carved up by the currently under-employed war machines of the neighbouring Serbs and Croats. Thus last weekend's referendum was supposed to show that Bosnia-Herzegovina want independence and sovereignty, the hope being that the European Community would then hasten to recognise the republic, which could perhaps eventually be "regionalised", with Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats given spheres of influence.

The details of how this last stage would operate have yet to be worked out. At best it is an attempt to prevent Belgrade and Zagreb swallowing up Bosnian territory, and leaving the Muslims with a poor, meaningless chunk in the middle. This necessary vagueness about what happens next has sent Serbs, Croats and Muslims hurrying for their guns. The religious and national tolerance of the republic is crumbling fast: traditional political alignments have fallen apart.

President Izetbegovic is a Muslim, like some 1.5 million other Bosnians. They are descendants of the Slav landowners who converted to Islam under the Ottomans. For the first-time visitor, the republic presents a strange vision:

out of a typical central European landscape of dense forest and green valleys, one stumbles into a city dominated by minarets and the calls of the muezzin. Architecturally, the mosques of Sarajevo rank among the world's best; there would have been more if Prince Eugene had not destroyed the city in 1697 on behalf of Christendom.

The Ottomans identified religion with nationality. When modern nationalism challenged this idea, both Serbs and Croats scrambled to claim the Bosnian Muslims as their own. Vuk Karadzic, the Serbian nationalist thinker of the early 19th century, tried to show that the Muslims belonged historically to Serbia. Later, during the second world war, the Ustaasi fascists even gave the Muslims the honorific title "blossom of the Croatian people".

Bosnian politicians have plainly favoured the Catholic Croats over the orthodox Serbs. In the past few years this has been an important political axis, with Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims making a

common front against the Serbian nationalist policies of Slobodan Milosevic. But recent talk in Zagreb about slicing up Bosnia and handing western Herzegovina to the Croats has destroyed any real trust.

Both Serbs and Croat militants have been convinced by the past eight months of war that military prowess is an essential part of a political solution. This leaves the Bosnian Muslims politically isolated, even though they form the biggest part of the population (44 per cent compared to the Serbs 31 per cent and the Croats 17 per cent).

The danger is not only that war will break out in every Bosnian street — the Muslims, Croats and Serbs are densely intertwined — but that the fighting will widen as the Bosnian Muslims seek support from Islamic states. President Izetbegovic told a Turkish newspaper the other day that he would appeal to friends, "primarily Turkey", if the federal army should try to attack.

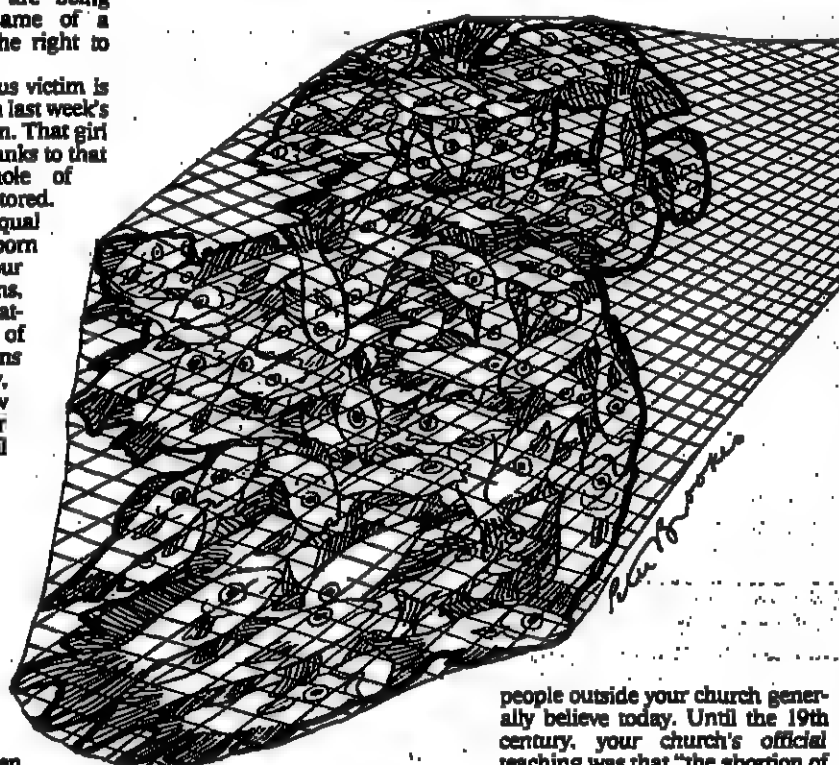
The main aim of both the Bosnian leadership and its well-wishers in Western Europe is to keep the federal Yugoslav army, which is stationed in large numbers in Bosnia, away from the Serbian radicals. This coalition proved deadly in Croatia, and it could have an even more devastating effect in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The Bosnian Serbs have allies among garrison commanders in towns strung along the border with Croatia. The Yugoslav officer corps, overwhelmingly Serbian, has its own agenda, and has not been brought under Mr Milosevic's control. Moreover, it is an army without a home.

In Russia, President Yeltsin has increased the salaries of officers and handed over married quarters to soldiers who have lost their privileges and security. In Bosnia, President Izetbegovic has been taking a similar tack with the Yugoslav army, guaranteeing their pensions and housing subsidies after independence. It is costing Bosnia-Herzegovina dearly: army bills are paid, if at all, in dinars printed recklessly in Belgrade, but this straightforward bribery may be the only way to exorcise Princip's ghost and avoid a gory Balkan war.

J'accuse: the Irish church

Conor Cruise O'Brien writes an open letter to the Catholic hierarchy



life should not be made to pay the penalty of death for the crime of another.

Your lordships, who do you think you are fooling? The legal outcome at which you express satisfaction is one which permits a girl to go to England to get an abortion. You then go on, as if nothing had happened, to reiterate, in all its purity, the very doctrine on which was based the High Court Injunction, the striking down of which by the Supreme Court you receive with satisfaction.

I have never read a statement which so happily combines absurdity, complacency, impudence, incoherence and incongruity as that 14-line farwa issued on your behalf by the Catholic press and information offices last week. I am afraid your lordships are so accustomed to having your utterances treated with respect that you have forgotten that nonsense is not entitled to respect, however exalted the personages who offer it to the public.

Your lordships have just had a bad couple of weeks. I suggest that you now take a rest. Specifically, I suggest that you refrain in future from efforts to shape the laws of this state, which are for all the citizens, and not just for what you call your flock. Your flock is increasingly less flock-like. It no longer follows your teaching on contraception. Your pastoral failure in that domain largely explains your move to change the laws of the state to embody your teaching on abortion. You hoped to use the machinery of law-enforcement to supplement your crumbling moral authority. The result has been a further diminution of your authority.

You may preach your peculiar doctrines to those who are willing to listen, but please don't try, any longer, to impose those doctrines on the rest of us by manipulating the laws of the state. Hierarchy and democracy go ill together, both in theory and in practice. If you haven't learnt that lesson in the past month, you never will.

tion, specifically in the case of victims of rape. It is well known that in the summer of 1960, some of those nuns who were victims of rape in the Congo (now Zaïre) underwent operations to ensure that they would not give birth. The right to life of those particular foetuses was not respected. I don't know what sophistries were invoked to pretend that abortion was not abortion in those cases. You and your somewhat less obnoxious Catholic counterparts in other lands have always an abundant supply of sophistries and sophists at your disposal.

In any case, you made no specific exception for the benefit of rape victims in the law you foisted on us in 1983. I wonder if any of you has regretted that omission during the crisis of your authority — for it is no less — that has followed the attorney-general's interim injunction on February 6.

You now apparently feel that the crisis is over: that the Supreme Court decision has let you off the hook. After expressing satisfaction with the speed of the Supreme Court decision, you added the following moral rider: "It remains the concern of the Catholic Church that, as always, whatever the circumstances, innocent new

people outside your church generally believe today. Until the 19th century, your church's official teaching was that "the abortion of a male foetus up until forty days after conception and of a female foetus up to 80 days after conception carried no penalty with it. In practice this meant — since there was no way of determining the sex of the foetus — that abortion was exempt from punishment for the first eighty days of pregnancy. In the late 19th century, for reasons unknown to me, the Catholic church infallibly decided that what it had been infallibly teaching up to then was now infallibly wrong. From this late period in the history of your ancient institution dates the doctrine of the right to life of the foetus from the moment of conception.

That doctrine is absolute and peremptory, though in practice your church has permitted abortion of your church, and yours only. This is manifestly unjust to those of us who conscientiously reject your teaching in that matter. I accuse you also of deceiving the public. In the sense that you knowingly permitted your agents to present a crudely simplified version of Catholic teaching on this matter. We were given to understand that it has always been the teaching of the church that the foetus, from the moment of conception, is fully a human being, whose right to be born is (at least) equal to its mother's right to live.

As you know, this is untrue. For most of your church's long lifetime, its teaching was quite different, and much closer to what

Votes from elsewhere

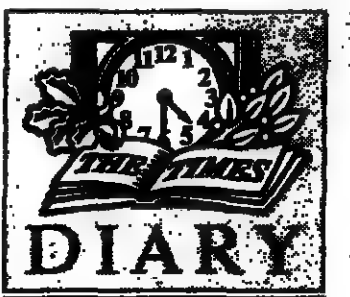
FOR the first time in her adult life, Margaret Thatcher will not be voting in person at a general election if polling day turns out to be April 9.

Mrs Thatcher will be returning from a lecture tour of America that evening, and will touch down at Heathrow just a few minutes after the polling booths close. She has decided to register a proxy vote in Dulwich, where the Tory MP Gerald Bowden is defending a majority of just 180. It will almost certainly be the last time she exercises her democratic right, since she is expected to go to the House of Lords immediately after the election, and will therefore lose her vote.

Mrs Thatcher had kept her diary free in anticipation of a May election, but even if the election is held on April 9, she has decided not to cancel her long-standing and lucrative decision to tour America, where each speech she makes is expected to net £30,000 for the Thatcher Foundation.

The news that she will be abroad for what may be the last week of election campaigning has been greeted with quiet relief by Conservative Central Office. She has received more than 150 invitations to speak during the election, but Downing Street and central office have not attempted to persuade her to change her plans, and Tory strategists are not unhappy that the former prime minister will be safely out of sight, if not mind, in what may be crucial days.

Fears had been growing that Mrs Thatcher's off-the-cuff remarks to journalists, invariably reported as rifts with John Major, could damage the campaign. Her speeches in America, however, will of course be closely scrutinised for



divergence from the party line. Before she leaves for America, Mrs Thatcher will campaign vigorously throughout the country, although contrary to some reports, she is not expected to share a platform with John Major.

The news that Mikhail Gorbachev is to be paid an undisclosed sum to allow a British television company to film an everyday portrait of ex-presidential life, will go some way to alleviate an existence that has recently been anything but joyous. To add to Gorbachev's woes, President Yeltsin is now trying to eject his former boss from his office, the headquarters of the Gorbachev Foundation, officially founded yesterday. The Russian Academy, which owns the office in fashionable Leningradskiy Prospekt, falls under the jurisdiction of Boris Yeltsin, and is making life as uncomfortable as possible for the former president in an effort to remove him, according to a senior Gorbachev aide. "We have to keep changing phone numbers as we are driven from one room to another," he says.

Ms MSS A £1 million appeal has been launched to prevent a world-famous manuscript collection on the

women's movement from being broken up. The Fewest Library in Whitechapel, consisting of some 50,000 documents — including letters from Virginia Woolf, Florence Nightingale, Queen Victoria, and Sylvia Plankhurst — is housed in a basement belonging to the City of London Polytechnic.

Much of the material is written on poor quality paper, and since the basement lacks a humidity control, large parts of the collection are rotting, and may have to



be divided between other libraries. The collection is now in such fragile condition that researchers may be denied access to the library. Germaine Greer, who is a patron of the library, says: "I don't want to see any library broken up. If they have to disband it there is a danger it might end up in that great seething cock-up, the British Library."

Back to bacteria AFTER his impassioned defence of bacteria in French cheese, Prince Charles is taking his crusade on behalf of the microbe a stage further with a withering attack on the government's agri-

cultural policy. In his next book, *Highgrove: Portrait of an Estate*, the prince will argue that experimental farming on his estate, where the bacilli roam at will in a chemical-free environment, should provide a blueprint for the agriculture ministry.

Giles Gordon, the prince's literary agent, says the book, due out in 1993, is already being discussed by traditional farming bodies. "The prince is writing the book with the journalist Charles Clover," he says, "because it would not be proper for the prince to utter these feelings about the ministry alone. He can hardly be seen to criticise his mother's government directly."

However, the agriculture minister may already be revising his views on a bacteriologically correct society: his attitude to what the prince calls "the odorous Pont L'Évêque" remains shrouded, but John Gummer has already announced that organic farming will form part of his plans for reforming the EC's common agricultural policy.

Today's announcement of the Booker prize judging panel is a week late, due to the apparent disappearance of one of the chosen judges. Mark Lawson of The Independent, John Coldstream of The Daily Telegraph and Harriet Harvey-Wood, the literature director of the British Council, were all easily traced, as was Times critic and author Victoria Glendinning, who is to chair proceedings. But Valentine Cunningham, a left-wing English don, seemed to have vanished from Christ Church, Oxford. Frantic messages were left at the porter's lodge, but not even Book Trust bloodhound Martyn Goff could locate him, until it finally dawned on the Booker committee... that Val Cunningham teaches at Corpus.



...and moreover
ALAN COREN

I am building a dog. It's coming along quite nicely, all things considered, even if some things unconsidered have caused the odd glitch: for example, you'd think you could find a set of bent hocks pre-fitted with round tight toes, but you can't. While, according to Cruft's, there are all kinds of feet to be found attached to bent hocks, including arched oval, hare-toed, and even the somewhat recherché knuckled-up, round tight toes do not come as standard. They have to be ordered separately.

As a consequence of this, my dog does not yet have legs. It has a finely chiselled head, it has broad chops and well-sprung ribs, it has well-angled hind-quarters and a tail set high at the insertion, but it has no legs. This is a serious shortcoming given that the dog's main duties will be to accompany me on long nocturnal walks and fetch things lost about the house, eg. fags, library tickets, car keys, and so on. Leglessness will thus be something of a handicap. I do not wish to amble the night pulling my dog behind me on a little trolley, a prey to every cat and joker, nor, pressed for a smoke or library book, do I want to hang about all day while my dog rolls slowly towards them.

I may have to compromise on the legs: take whatever feet they come with, I fancy. Tight round toes as being (a) likely to leave smaller footprints on the carpet after wet walks, and (b) safer from harm at crowded parties when a careless brogue could

mean major veterinary bills and — if the dog demonstrates any spirit — major lawsuits, but you can't have everything. Ears have been a headache, too. I had been rather keen on lobular as being better for reflective fondling (mine, not the dog's), but they do not go with the chiselled head, and as the head is non-negotiable, we both seem to be stuck with ears erect and triangular, ie. dust traps. When did all this start? On the morning after my Friday piece about taking a midnight walk. I received a letter from a reader who said he was astonished to find no mention of my dog, for he'd been sure I was a dog-owner, and as he warned hysterically to his theme, I divined that he saw man as having so great a duty to dogs that to stroll alone was a criminal waste of walking. So much so that if, as walker, I didn't have a dog, then I ought to buy one.

I thought for a bit. Working at home as I do, it would be agreeable to have a dog. There would be two of us to stare out of the window. But which breed? I rang a friend whose clothes are always covered in hair, and he said you need Erich Tylinek's *The Dog*, borrow it, I'll answer all your questions. What it did, of course, was question all my answers.

For example, I had already reached the point of choosing between an Irish Terrier and an Afghan, which I have always liked, but the book said the former was noted for its readi-

ness to fight, while the latter was aloof and obstinate. So both were out, since I had no wish to while away the Crickwood nights either prising my best friend's jaws from anything that moved, or fondling the ears of a pig-headed snob. But if not these, what? The Karelian Bear-Dog, perhaps? "Bred expressly for big-game hunting", it would be just the thing to stan the strolling chic — yes, I'd say, we're off to bag a few rhino as soon as the weather perks up — but "it shuns domesticity". Lost keys would leave it cold. The Bloodhound, then? It will find anything, but "relishes several days' tracking". I would have to leave my glasses in Swindon, just to get it to accept the job. The Bolognese? "Gentle and modest", I wanted to, but "an ever-ready head-dog". You would not be able to take your eyes off it for a second. The garden would fill with waifs and milkmen.

All Sunday, I pored and annotated. I made Xeroxes, cut them up into canine components, mixed and matched. Did you know that there was no such thing as the perfect pooch? Until yesterday, yesterday, I arrived at my ideal identidog, tough but friendly, loyal but independent, keen on short walks, cheap food, fetching and carrying, and great to look at, at least, from the shoulder up. It is a Pyrenean Cockerpoindog, Setter-haired Sheephound, and as soon as I decide on a suitable set of legs, I shall ring Harrod's. I'm told they can track down anything.



THE CASE FOR BORROWING

The sound and fury over the prospective "imprudence" of next week's Budget is a testimony to Margaret Thatcher's enduring impact on British politics. Thirty years ago, it would have been hard to imagine the British public worrying about fiscal rectitude at a time when the economy was in deep recession and when the British government was less in debt than America or Germany. British politicians of all parties now seem to be more anxious about the control of government borrowing than the gilt-edged investors who are paid to worry about these things. The markets have been driving the price of government bonds slowly but surely upwards, even as forecasts of the public-sector borrowing requirement (PSBR) have risen ineluctably.

As usual, markets have understood things better than politicians. A PSBR of £20 billion, £25 billion or even £30 billion is not automatically a sign of imprudence, a threat to future prosperity, or a burden on future grandchildren. Whether public borrowing is or is not desirable depends simply on the uses to which the borrowed money is put and on other policies used by government to achieve its economic objectives. On these considerations alone should Norman Lamont's borrowing next week be assessed, together with the alternatives offered by John Smith and Alan Beith.

Increasing public borrowing is not the best way to pull an economy out of recession. A sounder approach is to cut interest rates and allow the exchange rate to find its own level. Sterling, though, is now in the exchange-rate mechanism. The main cost of ERM membership is that British interest rates are now driven primarily by economic conditions in Germany, not Britain, precluding the monetary stimulus the British economy has clearly needed for over a year. But the ERM also makes it easier to run a high PSBR. Because the British government now borrows from a European-wide pool of savings, a higher PSBR is unlikely to push British interest rates upwards, nor a lower PSBR be rewarded by lower interest rates.

DOES NANNY KNOW BEST?

Britain has at last become a self-help society, trumpets a new report from Mimm. People are spending more on private health and education, insurance and pensions, detaching themselves from, or supplementing, state provision. Have the British decided no longer to "keep a hold of Nurse" because they feel grown-up enough to fend for themselves? Or have they lost confidence in the capacity of a tired and jaded Nurse to protect them from lions and other perils?

Like the seven ages of man, there are at least three ages of government. The poor country can afford little or no welfare for its people, who are forced to rely on charity and on each other for food, shelter, education and health care. As countries become richer, they can afford public housing, education and health, sickness and unemployment benefit, pensions. But this means public spending and a corresponding desire on the part of the state for ever greater control. The local authority that provides a house wants to determine what colour the front door should be. The government that pays for a national health service wants its citizens to eat healthily, stop smoking and belt up in the back. Nanny rules.

With the third age comes a questioning of this bossiness, of which Margaret Thatcher made a political leitmotif. Last year, the Social Democrats in Sweden suffered their worst election defeat since 1928. The country had become among the most prosperous in Europe. Its welfare state tightly held the hands of its citizens and they duly rebelled against what has come to be termed "welfare fascism". The Social Democrats were booed out in favour of more right-wing parties. Holding the balance of power was a six-month-old populist libertarian party called New Democracy. Its campaign slogan was "Life should be fun", with a vote-winning pledge to abolish the state monopoly on alcohol sales. Similar movements have developed elsewhere in Europe.

ROCKY HORROR SHOW

What should the Sphinx do about her (his?) face? The question has worried the thoughtful for ages, though, as Oedipus discovered, answering the Sphinx's riddle does not necessarily pay. On that occasion the Sphinx was on holiday from Giza, enjoying a little plugging and pillaging around Thebes. In Greek her name means "Strangler", and the proto-feminist notion of a winged woman with the body of a lion came originally from Chaldaea. But it is the Great Sphinx of Egypt that is now causing concern. The oldest sculpture in the world is falling to bits from old age and modern stress. A four-day international conference in Cairo ended yesterday, having failed to agree on further remedial treatment and cosmetic and plastic surgery for the Sphinx.

For most of her life the Sphinx was protected from the slow decay of the centuries by being buried up to her neck in the sands of the Nile. The latest chronology dates her from the seventh millennium BC, and has the pyramid-building Pharaoh Khephren carving out her hindquarters and replacing the original enigmatic face with his own 5,000 years later, thus creating a truly androgynous creature.

The Sphinx's troubles really started with the modern cult of popular Egyptology. Napoleon's soldiers used her for target practice. Afro-centrist pseudo-scholars in the United States accuse Napoleon of deliberately having the Sphinx's nose shot off, in order to destroy its negroid features. In this way he is supposed to have robbed black Africa of the desired but dubious honour of

By entering the ERM, Britain has joined a club in which there are strong incentives for governments to borrow as much as possible. Even a £30 billion PSBR, which would amount to 5 per cent of gross domestic product, would leave Britain among the more fiscally responsible of ERM members. Germany's present PSBR is well over 6 per cent.

Whether the proceeds of borrowing should be used to finance tax cuts or public spending is another matter. There is much merit in Labour and Liberal claims that borrowing should finance investment, not consumption. But would the "investment" policies of the opposition parties really be more productive than the government's preferred tax cuts? Would higher public pensions, subsidies for otherwise uneconomic industries and emergency training programmes to take the jobless off the unemployment registers contribute more to the economy's productive capacity than the private investments brought forth by lower taxes and higher private and corporate spending?

The answer at present must tilt towards tax cuts. This government has already been more than generous to its own sector and its own workforce. Public expenditure is due to rise this year by £5 billion more than can be accounted for by the recession. So far, the government appears to have assumed that Britain needs a public-spending-led recovery. To achieve this, there are options other than a cut in the standard rate of income tax, which has the disadvantage politically of being irreversible. A reduction in the business rate would feed directly through into corporate liquidity. A raising of tax thresholds should have a more direct impact on marginal workers than an across-the-board cut in standard tax rates. It is not the level of the PSBR that should concern the public and politicians in next Tuesday's Budget but the manner in which an inevitable rise in such borrowing should be spent to help the economy out of the recession.

Has Britain reached its third age? Nanny may be somewhat less strict here than in Scandinavia. But citizens are still compulsorily protected "for their own good" against risks of harm that they might otherwise be prepared to take. All London's train services are shut down after an IRA threat, though the risk to individual travellers is statistically infinitesimal and certainly less than jumping on an open-platform bus outside the station. Seatbelts are compulsory, cannabis is criminal, chaffins are outlawed, standing in football stadiums is banned. Yet when Nanny has (all too rarely) dared to allow her child to stray, the "fear of finding something worse" has proved baseless. Pub opening hours have been liberalised and the streets of England are not swarming with drunks.

But care must be taken over rash conclusions. Britain's increased spending on private services that compete with the state may be a rebellion against the bureaucracy and bossiness of the state. It could equally signal an anxiety that public services are deteriorating. Mori's survey for Times Newspapers this week found 69 per cent of people wishing the government would spend more on public services, compared with just 26 per cent wanting tax cuts. If schools and hospitals were good enough, people would not feel the need, *fauts de mieux*, to invest in the private sector.

Whichever is right, Nanny's role is changing. Over the past decade, the trend has been away from the state as provider towards provision by the private sector with government as regulator. Even Labour no longer wants to renationalise what the Tories privatised. But it does want tougher regulation. So the difference now lies in how strict Nanny will be. Voters will soon have to choose between the all-embracing Nanny who stands no nonsense and the au pair with a lighter touch and a greater tolerance for mischief.

being recognised as the cradle of civilisation. Since her second nose job, the Sphinx has been continuously eroded by acid rain, night humidity, a rising water table, the desert winds and the squall of mass tourism.

The most damaging attack came 20 years ago when scientists injected a chemical into her breast to harden the stone. The plastic was stronger than the spongy limestone, and has flaked away chunks of the mother rock it was meant to save. The archaeological chemist in charge showed a daring impudence (the Sphinx is not to be mocked) in saying: "Basically, you are dealing with a lousy rock that has been a lousy rock for ever."

The true riddling message of the Sphinx without a secret is that, by definition, no human artefact can last for ever. One day the pyramids and the Sphinx, who with a lion for her crupper sits with eternity at supper, must return to the dust and atoms from which they came. Man can only postpone inevitable decay. To be pyramidal is to be mortal. The only way to preserve the Sphinx by Spoonlight, in a poetic transposition by the Rev W. A. Spooner, is to rebury her in the sands from which she sprang. At a cleaned-up and adams-marked Pharaohland by the Nile, polystyrene and fibreglass can create a new Sphinx for our times, who will appear a great deal sexier and less fuzzy at the edges on home videos and holiday snaps than the crumbling old monster. She might even think up a new and better riddle on tape to ask the punters. Those who worship the past in stone are condemned to destroy it.

Time to reassess defence needs

From Mr M. B. H. Ashmore

Sir, It would seem, amidst all the arguments and counter arguments of the forthcoming election campaign, that defence is likely to be pushed to the back of the stage. First, because the government is showing signs of realising that its previous rush, last summer, into decisions about our future defence policy and the strength of our armed forces may have led it into a mistaken assessment of our needs, particularly so far as the Army is concerned.

Second, because the Labour party may content itself with its commitment to a full defence review should it find itself in power after the election. That is, except for one thing — the publication on March 6 of the long-awaited report by the Commons Select Committee on Defence. Ministers must be bracing themselves for what looks like being an extremely critical report. No doubt they will be seeking to minimise the damage this report can do to their election campaign. We should not be deceived by this. The future defence of the nation is too important to be put at risk for the sake of the reputations of a few ministers.

At the centre of the discussion on Options for Change has been the size of the infantry, focused on the requirement for sufficient battalions to meet our current emergency commitments, while at the same time allowing enough time for these units to recover from these arduous unaccompanied tours and to retrain for their primary strategic roles.

What is happening now is illustrative of the much more serious situation which will almost certainly develop once the planned reductions are completed in 1995: a battalion returning to Northern Ireland after as little as 11 months out of the province; another battalion in Northern Ireland now, but due to go to Belize in November; and the cancellation of important armoured warfare training in Canada by a unit of what will be the Rapid Reaction Corps, so that the battalion can go to Northern Ireland instead. This latter hardly fits with Mr King's often repeated promise of "smaller but better".

No doubt ministers are hoping this problem will blow over, and quickly, as it is a source of constant embarrassment, particularly to a party which prides itself on being "the party of strong defence". It is unlikely to do so until the government comes to its senses and commits itself to a proper re-examination of defence requirements.

Yours sincerely,
M. B. H. ASHMORE
Commanding Officer,
1st Battalion,
The Royal Scots, 1981-3,
Cocklaw, Elrickie,
Biggar, Lanarkshire,
February 27.

Venetian churches

From Mr James Lees-Milne

Sir, I agree with Lord Norwich ("Venice behind closed doors", February 29) that it is dreadful to contemplate the Venetian churches kept closed except for Mass. On the other hand so long as the age we live in is dominated by criminals some drastic steps have to be taken to protect the churches' art treasures.

I feel less sympathy for the tourists than for the daily worshippers who drop in at odd moments for prayer. The tourists should be asked to pay for the privilege of entry to these holy places. The worshippers, who are mostly natives of the city, should on no account be charged or penalised.

I suggest that every altar painting of artistic merit should be replaced by a coloured photographic reproduction, and every figure in marble or bronze, indeed every silver candlestick and portable treasure, should be substituted by a replica in glass fibre or the up-to-date equivalent of that composition.

It is advisable to have several copies of each object made because the thieves are bound to take the reproductions from time to time. The originals can either be displayed in the Accademia or be kept under lock and key to be viewed by the tourists for a fee in the vestibule.

Yours,
JAMES LEES-MILNE,
Essex House,
Bathampton, Avon,
March 2.

Samaria and Judaea

From Mr Lionel Bloch

Sir, Any serious discussion on Israel's policies in Samaria and Judaea must start by the acceptance of a very clear distinction between the notions of autonomy and sovereignty.

Mr Baker's halfway house, in his phrase "more than autonomy and less than statehood", quoted in your leading article, "Israel's apartheid" (February 28), will not satisfy anybody.

You observe quite correctly that under Israel's current proposals, the responsibility for defence, military security and foreign affairs in the West Bank is to remain under its control. Had Israel been prepared to relinquish these responsibilities, it would in fact confer independence on a PLO-dominated mini-state.

If the Bush Administration has now reversed its well-known opposition to the creation of such a state,

Limits on intervention in the arts

From Sir Denis Forman

Sir, Ten years ago I would have supported the distinguished body of co-chairmen of the Arts Council in their defence (letter, February 26) of the arm's-length principle in funding arts. Today, despite my defence for this formidable accumulation of experience and expertise, I beg leave to point out that when the minister suggests we might look at the possibility of directly funding the five "national" companies from his office he is doing little more than asking us to take cognisance of what has increasingly become the case in recent years.

The funding demands of the arts have so far outstripped the resources that the government makes available that the Arts Council has become not so much a grant-giving body as broker between the arts institutions, many of them struggling for survival, and their paymaster, who must surely share the responsibility if not for their welfare, at least for their continuing existence.

The arts have so greatly gained in national importance since the arm's-length principle was formulated that the time must come sooner or later when we accept that they must take their place in the direct line of government responsibility either nationally, as in France, or as the responsibility mainly of regional government, as in Germany.

Both the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties are likely to include plans for a Ministry of the Arts in their election manifestos and it must be questionable whether these ministries would be any less interventionist than the present Office of Arts and Libraries.

There is, of course, the obvious danger of politically motivated interference in arts policy. Even if this does not occur it will be suspected. There will also be embarrassments for the minister. Suppose, for instance, one of the national companies was to resurrect Hochuth's play *The Soldiers*, which alleges that Winston Churchill planned the death of General Sikorski? There might be uncomfortable times in Westminster.

Perhaps the chairmen of the five national companies together with the chairmen of the regional councils could provide an advisory group to afford some protection for the minister when unjustly criticised and some corrective influence upon him if and when

Conflict in Karabakh

From Baroness Cox

Sir, I have visited Nagorno Karabakh five times in the last few months: including two visits in January, with the Andrei Sakharov Foundation and Christian Solidarity International, taking in medical supplies and investigating human rights violations. Both organisations are impartial, concerned equally for the Armenian and Azeri communities. We have visited both sides: we condemn brutally committed by either.

The predicament of Azerbaijanis, which you have reported over the last two days, is indeed tragic. So, too, is the suffering of the 180,000 Armenians in Karabakh where the Azerbaijanis have imposed a blockade which denies the Armenian population electricity, running water, fuel and medicines, and are now using flamethrowers (BM21) multiple missile launchers on the civilian population of Karabakh's capital, Stepanakert.

I and my colleagues have also seen

Public-sector pay

From Mr Alastair Hatchett

Sir, Your industrial correspondent, Ross Tiesman (report, February 28), gives credence to, frankly, eccentric predictions on public-sector pay by Mr Chris Trinder of CIPA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy). Mr Trinder claims that public-sector pay rises will exceed inflation by 3.4 to 4.3 per cent in every year to 1995-6. Predictions of this kind are impossible to substantiate as we do not know how the economy will perform, or what will be the state of the labour market or the prevailing rate of inflation. Where do his decimal places come from?

His comparison of public and private-sector pay is flawed. There is no homogeneity about private-sector pay: it reflects economic circumstances and performance. At the top end there has, in general, been an

escalation in salary and benefit levels over the past four years which has not yet been fully reflected in awards by the TSRB (top salaries review body). Elsewhere there has been a wide range of increases, roughly comparable with the different levels of increase agreed within the public sector.

The process of comparability that exists for public-sector pay determination tends to mean a continual process of catch-up with the private sector. But TSRB increases for 1992 do not set precedents for every year to 1995-6. Nor, in our view, do the 1992 TSRB awards set a rigid precedent for pay across the entire public sector even for this year — they certainly have not in past years.

Yours sincerely,
ALASTAIR HATCHETT,
Editor, IDS Report,
Incomes Data Services Ltd.,
193 St John Street, EC1,
February 28.

From Mr Douglas Davis
Sir, You may question Israel's proposals for autonomy; you may even, wrongly in my opinion, impute bad faith in its motives. But it is entirely erroneous to latch on to Mrs Hanan Ashrawi's soundbite diplomacy and declare in your leading article's headline that its proposals for self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip amount to apartheid, a loathsome, neo-Nazi philosophy designed to segregate people on grounds of race.

The essential nature of the dispute between the Palestinians and Israel, whose citizens of many races enjoy full equality, is a clash of nationalism and religion, not unlike conflicts that are being experienced in a host of other states and regions, including Northern Ireland.

Yours faithfully,
DOUGLAS DAVIS,
20 Corringham Court,
Corringham Road, NW11,
February 28.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5846.

Getting to grips with the weather

From the Chief Executive of the Meteorological Office

Sir, May I answer some of the points raised regarding weather forecasts on radio and TV (letters, February 20)? Viewers' difficulties in recalling the relevant information from weather forecasts are similar to the difficulties that most people experience in recalling any specific item from lists of detailed information given on TV and radio. This has been established from our own and others' research and therefore we plan and present forecasts in the knowledge of this fact.

In 1990, we split the UK into ten clearly defined regions and introduced consistency into the use of these regions in broadcasts on national radio. We shall be pleased to send any interested listeners a map showing our regions.

Research has also shown that a listener retains information more easily if it is given in a set order. However, this leads to the criticism that weather forecasts are boring. We are trying to strike a balance, using a standard order on most occasions (as on the shipping forecast), but on occasion leading with some other region where there is particularly noteworthy weather.

There is clear evidence that people retain more information when they have a carefully used visual aid in addition to the spoken word: 90 per cent of those questioned in our research stated that they obtained their weather information from TV. But while some people appreciate the displaying of bobars and fronts, others, like Mr Abeles (letter, February 19), favour a simpler approach. It is difficult to please everyone, especially inside two minutes. We will continue to do everything we can to make weather forecasts more easily understood.

Yours sincerely,
J. C. R. HUNT,
Chief Executive,
The Meteorological Office,
Sutton House, London Road,
Bracknell, Berkshire,
March 3.

From Mr Zvi Silver
Sir, I suggest that the reason people do not remember anything about the weather forecast is that they are not really interested in the information supplied. What they want to know is, "Do I need a coat today or should I take an umbrella?"

Proof of this can be obtained by seeing someone look at their watch, then asking them the time. They always look at their watch again because it is useless information and they have not "bled" it in their brain.

Yours faithfully,
ZVI SILVER,
16 Oakmead Gardens,
Edgware, Middlesex.

From Mr M. G. Henley
Sir, I have found that the weather forecasts are much more comprehensible with the sound turned off.

Yours sincerely,
M. G. HENLEY,
8 Harn Close,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Always behind

From the Head Valet of The Savoy

Sir, Whilst I found your recent correspondence (February 26, 28) very amusing, none of the writers seems to realise the fundamental problem with buttons. It doesn't matter whether people are fat or thin, slouching or not and sit down with or without their jackets on: the problem lies with the buttons, which are now machine-stitched rather than sewn on by hand.

In the Savoy's valet department, we now sew on as many as 50 buttons per week, 20 per cent of which are back-pocket buttons. The only way to stop this is to hand-sew the buttons on immediately a suit is bought.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK BOWEN,
Braddish House,
Diptford, Totnes, Devon.

Whitehall whammy?

From Dr D. H. Smith

Sir, Is not the paucity of the government's regional policy illustrated by two events in the last week? First, the decision to send the foreign secretary to address the Scots and then the closure of the M4 on, of all days, St David's Day.

Yours faithfully,
D. H. SMITH,
The Surgery, Church Lane,
Swineshead, Boston, Lincolnshire,
March 3.

**BY DOUGLAS BROOM
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
CORRESPONDENT**

A third option is to slow down the withdrawal of the safety net designed to cushion the impact of the poll tax on areas with low rateable values. The grant is due to be withdrawn in April adding up to £25 a head to poll tax bills in many of the most marginal seats held by the Tories.



Continued from page 1

Had the government whips known what was up, they might have made a better fist of keeping their troops on guard. But the opposition, not for the first time, had prepared its ambush subtly. Both Labour and Liberal peers were warned in advance to come in for the crucial votes at 9pm — but not to tell anyone they were doing so. Celia Thomas, unofficial manager of the 60 Liberal

Who's going to inspect MR. CLARKE?

Calbra

The unity of the opposition was ensured by the co-operation of two experienced whips, the affable Lord Graham of Edmonton, a former Co-op-sponsored MP for Labour, and Lord Tordoff of

Clarke's new deal, page 2

The experts are revisiting the crash site again this week, exploring the possibility of a "hydraulic jump," a strong updraft on the lee side of mountains similar to the effect in rivers when fast-moving water flows over a large rock. Supercomputers at the National Centre for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado are being used to create a model of airflow at Colorado springs in the hopes of finding some fresh confirmation. The NTSB does point out that the most modern type of flight recorder, not installed in the jet which crashed, would give a wealth of additional data to enable them to detect a cause.

large again as Clapham Common. You could construct four thousand Bedouin tents from it and shelter a whole tribe. You could build the Palace of Versailles on such a plot, and surround it with gardens and trees. There are days when I wonder whether these might not be preferable projects.

MATTHEW PARRIS

8 This coastal region sounds dull (8).
14 Silk producer located on the outskirts of London town (9).
15 Mound supporting breakwater liable to enlargement (8).
16 Put stopper on squash (8).
17 The appropriate treatment to put someone under (8).
18 A rook when fully grown coils round this (8).
19 Brawl improvising with piercing instrument (7).

Concise Crossword, page 11
Life & Times section

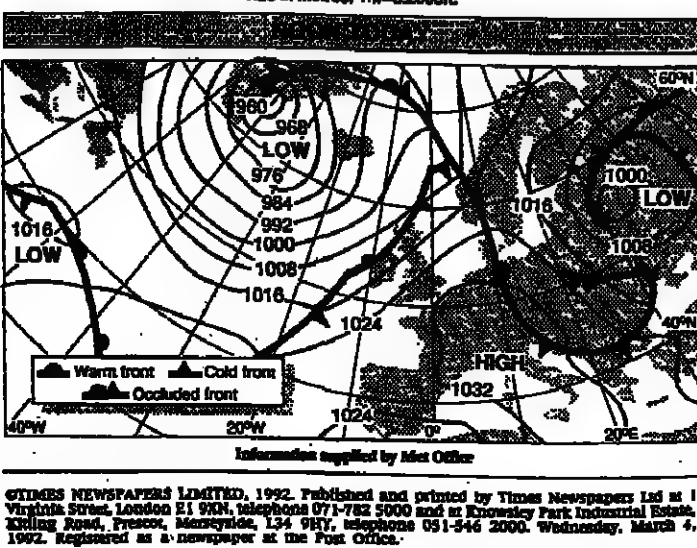
| | |
|--|----|
| London & SE | |
| C. London (within N & S Circ.) | 73 |
| M-ways/roads M4-M1 | 73 |
| M-ways/roads M1-Dartford T. | 73 |
| M-ways/roads Dartford T-M23 | 73 |
| M-ways/roads M23-M4 | 73 |
| M25 London Orbital only | 73 |
| National | |
| National motorways | 73 |
| West Country | 73 |
| Wales | 73 |
| Midlands | 74 |
| East Anglia | 74 |
| North-west England | 74 |
| North-east England | 74 |
| Scotland | 74 |
| North Ireland | 74 |
| AA Roadwatch is charged at 36p per minute (cheap rates) and 48p per minute at all other times. | |

| | | | | |
|------------------|---------|--------|-------------------------|-----|
| Portugal Express | 258.00 | 240.00 | Lincs & Humberside | 719 |
| South Africa Rd | 6.40 | 4.80 | Dyfed & Pembro | 716 |
| Spain | 108.00 | 107.00 | Gloucestershire & Croyd | 715 |
| Sweden Rn | 11.00 | 10.20 | N W England | 714 |
| Switzerland Fr | 2.75 | 2.65 | W & S Yorks & Dale | 717 |
| Turkey Lim | 1050.00 | 953.00 | N E England | 718 |
| USA & Canada | 1.93 | 1.70 | Cumbria & Lake District | 719 |
| Europevia Dir | 1.00 | 0.80 | SC Scotland | 720 |

Rates for each denomination bank note only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques.

Monday, Highest day temp: Torquay, Devon, 12C (54F). Lowest day temp: Exeter, Dumfriesshire, Dumfries and Galloway, 5C (41F). Lowest night temp: Torquay, Devon, 6.4Cn. Highest sunshine: Torquay, Devon, and Jersey, 9.2hr.

Weather forecast: letters, page 13



● BUSINESS NEWS 17-23
● RACING 25
● SPORT 24-28

Profits rise to £618 million but bad debt provisions are trebled

Abbey confident that worst of recession is over

By JONATHAN PEYRON

ABBEY National, Britain's second-biggest mortgage lender and its second most profitable bank, has said that the worst of the recession is over and expects the property market to "get progressively better" during the rest of this year.

The upbeat statement contrasted with last week's gloomy forecasts for the economy from the clearing banks. Abbey yesterday announced a 6 per cent improvement in pre-tax profits to £618 million for the year to the end of December after trebled bad debt provisions of £155 million, and a 10.5 per cent increase in the dividend to 10.5p.

The final dividend payment was 7p compared with 6.35p. The figures were in line with market expectations but the shares shed 11p to 292p on profit taking.

Abbey said that "encouraging signs" in the figures for mortgage payment arrears pointed to a recovery in the level of activity in the housing market.

The number of Abbey National accounts that were between three and five months in arrears fell from a peak of 40,000 in the summer to 35,000 at the year end. Accounts that were six months or more in arrears totalled 24,419, or 1.75 per cent of total mortgage accounts. This compares with an industry average of 2.8 per cent.

However, repossession

rose from 5,829 to 8,871 with little improvement expected in the current year. Repossessions in the second half were 400 below the figure for the first six months.

Abbey said that the interest rate reductions of this and last year, the government's payment of mortgage benefit direct to lenders, and the temporary concession on stamp duty will all help the housing market.

The profits were struck after bad debt provisions of £155 million (£55 million), of which £100 million related to United Kingdom mortgage lending, £17 million to overseas residential lending, £10 million to non-residential property lending, and £28 million to unsecured personal loans.

John Bayliss, the managing director, said that the relatively low level of provisioning reflected Abbey's decision to sacrifice market share in the 1987 to 1988 period "because we saw the market was overheating".

Mr Bayliss added that "the board is determined to maintain the quality of lending almost regardless of market share in the short term". Abbey's market share of net mortgage lending fell from 14.3 per cent to 13.8 per cent last year.

Net interest income rose by 20 per cent from £956 million to £1.14 billion and group assets grew by 23 per cent to £57.4 billion. The United Kingdom retail margin rose from 1.8 per cent to 1.91 per

cent after an increased deferral of interest on some mortgage accounts in arrears of £45 million compared with £8 million.

The overall group margin fell from 2.28 per cent to 2.2 per cent because of an increase in treasury assets earning a narrower margin. Profits from Abbey's treasury operations were £62 million and assets managed by the treasury rose from £10 billion to £16 billion.

The estate agency operations recorded a loss of £19 million, compared with £20 million after £3 million of restructuring charges, despite a 2 per cent increase in house sale volumes and an increase in commission rates. Abbey National Homes, the property subsidiary, made a loss before tax of £24 million.

The group's capital ratios remained strong with a total risk to assets ratio of 10.8 per cent. Tier 1 capital of 11.4 per cent and Tier 2 capital at 23 per cent of Tier 1.

Operating expenses increased by 25 per cent to £635 million and capital expenditure rose from £136 million to £209 million, of which the bulk was spent on the UK retail network. The operating expenses include an exceptional item of £6 million for the expected contribution to the deposit protection fund after the BCCI scandal. The group's operating expenses to net operating income ratio rose to 45.1 per cent.

Times, page 28



Catching the habit: Sir Christopher Tugendhat (left) and Abbey chief executive Peter Birch yesterday

Inspectors investigate Spanish bank deals

FROM EDWARD OWEN IN MADRID

SPANISH government inspectors yesterday started to monitor all dealings of Banco Ibercorp here after the Bank of Spain stepped in when the deadline passed for its sale.

Mariano Rubio, governor of the Bank of Spain, has failed to find a buyer for the troubled Ibercorp investment group, with which he has embarrassing connections. A month ago Manuel de la Concha, the president of Ibercorp, who has handled Señor Rubio's investment portfolio for 25 years, started to look for a buyer for his bank. But so many questions were raised that the Madrid stock exchange is investigating the group for serious irregularities.

The Bank of Spain announced on Monday night that it had intervened over Banco Ibercorp to protect its creditors when negotiations, headed by Señor Rubio, collapsed.

After being turned down by four of Spain's leading banks, final offers by José Luis Vértiz, president of Banco Inversión, failed to acquire Banco Ibercorp for a symbolic peseta a share.

The Ibercorp Group was founded by Señor de la Concha, a former head of the Madrid stock exchange. Last year Señor de la Concha and his partner, Jaime Soto, valued their group at 10 billion pesetas (£55 million) but independent audits have detected massive losses and the switching of funds through a maze of companies. Señor Rubio's resignation over the Ibercorp affair was refused a fortnight ago, but now the opposition parties in parliament are demanding an all-party investigation into the collapse of Ibercorp.

BAe wins £570m order for air-to-air missiles

By MICHAEL EVANS and ROSS TIEMAN

THE government has awarded a £570 million order to British Aerospace for a new air-to-air missile, lifting the threat of 1,000 redundancies and opening up a £5 billion export market over 20 years.

The contract, to complete development and supply 1,000 of the advanced short-range air-to-air missile (Asraam), will also secure Britain's lead guided weapons technology.

Asraam will replace the American Sidewinder missile, in service in various forms for 30 years. The weapon is intended for the Harrier jump jet and the European fighter aircraft (EFA) now being developed by Britain, Germany, Spain and Italy, which is scheduled to enter service early next century.

The decision, announced yesterday by Tom King, the defence secretary, means that the government has handed out orders and potential orders for military equipment worth £2 billion this year. He said: "This new missile will provide a vital enhancement to our air defence capability in the future."

The decision ends 12 years of uncertainty over development of the missile which was supposed to be in service with the RAF by 1994. Delivery will be in the late Nineties. The Asraam project began in October 1979 when feasibility studies were carried out by Britain, Germany, Norway and Canada. However, all three of Britain's partners dropped out more than two years ago. The defence ministry launched a new competition for the missile after MPs on the Commons defence committee criticised the programme. BAe teamed up with Hughes Aircraft, the American firm, and submitted a final offer to the ministry on January 29.

The rivals for the contract were GEC-Marconi ordered by Matra of France,

and Bodenseewerk Gerate-technik (BGT) of Germany. The new missile will be 80 per cent built in Britain, with the work carried out at British Aerospace plants in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, Luton in Lancashire and at the Hughes factory in Glenrothes, Fife. Other companies to benefit will be Royal Ordnance at Kidderminster, Thorn EMI at Feltham and Lucas at Bradford.

David Laybourn, managing director of BAe's dynamics division, said: "Asraam will provide a firm foundation for dynamics for the foreseeable future." The company expects the order to open up world markets, with potential contracts for about 30,000 missiles, worth at least £5 billion. The biggest market is likely to be America. BAe has an agreement with Hughes which allows it to build the missile in America if the American defence department places an order.

Losses mount at GA

By GRAHAM STEADMAN FINANCIAL EDITOR

LOSSES at General Accident, the composite insurance group, increased from £121 million to £172 million before tax last year but the dividend is to stay at 26.75p a share. There was also an improving trend in its underwriting and better results from most overseas business, though not in America.

Nelson Robertson, chief general manager, said GA, which is based in Perth, expected a much lower loss this year and would not rule out a return to profit. GA shares rose 19p to 456p.

The group's British underwriting losses increased from £231 million to £342 million, of a group total of £569 million, although the domestic account brings in only 36 per cent of premiums. These included £46 million from the group's 4 per cent share of the mortgage indemnity market.

GA has lost part of its share of the British insurance market because of its drive to raise premiums and stem losses. Worldwide, non-life premiums rose 5.7 per cent to £3.22



Robertson: hopeful

billion but UK premiums fell marginally to £1.17 billion, despite rate increases averaging a quarter in motor premiums and similar but later rises in household premiums. Motor premiums fell 5.6 per cent to £374 million.

Mr Robertson said GA had committed itself more than ever to raising premiums to economic levels, if necessary at the expense of market share. Frequency of motor claims had started falling, against market trend, he added. Market share was stabilising and GA hoped to win back business now other groups had followed its lead

in raising premiums. GA is also continuing to cut costs. Last year, it shed 1,100 jobs, 14 per cent of its insurance workforce. A net 800 jobs are likely to go this year, mostly from non-replacement, exceeding the group's original two-year target of cutting 20 per cent.

In the fourth quarter, the group's £39 million pre-tax loss was down £12 million on a year earlier. Underwriting losses in Britain were contained at a similar rate to the previous two quarters even though the winter period is usually by far the worst.

Losses from the group's estate agencies fell £5 million to £18 million. Life profits rose £2 million to £27 million after development losses abroad.

Gross investment income rose 4.4 per cent but net investment income grew 10 per cent thanks to lower borrowings.

Net asset value was 316p (330p) last year but has since recovered to 328p, due to rising investment values. The solvency margin is 42.8 per cent (47.5 per cent).

Comment, page 21

Urging more funds for Airbus will upset America

EC grounds its own airline report

FROM TOM WALKER IN BRUSSELS

A REPORT on the financing of the Airbus consortium ordered from an independent consultant by the European Commission has been suppressed because its findings are deeply embarrassing at a time when Gatt negotiations and trade relations with America are at their most sensitive.

The report, ordered by the commission's internal market and industry directorate and produced by Arthur D Little, the London consultant, recommends the EC should do just what it claims not to — pump billions of dollars into the civil aviation industry by means of research and development packages. Ironically a different commission department, external relations, independently ordered a report on American financing of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas before Christmas that revealed that America has provided up to \$41.5 billion in support to its civilian aircraft sector over the past 15 years. But in a splendid example of the intercom-

mingling between rival departments, Martin Bangemann, internal market commissioner, then allowed Arthur D Little to reveal that EC governments involved in Airbus are busy subsidising the consortium and to recommend that they go on doing so.

An industry expert who has seen a copy of the report said: "It's all caught up in this pedantic legal argument at the moment that tries to prevent any written admission that subsidies exist in Europe." He doubted the report would ever see the light of day, although a high-ranking internal market official recently claimed in an airline industry newsletter that an "executive summary" of the Little survey will be made available. "I'll believe it when I see it," the industry source added. The commission, which represents Britain, Germany, France and Spain in the Airbus case, has been at loggerheads with America for years over the civil aviation industry issue.

A special panel at Gatt in Geneva has been set up to look at the case, and the last thing the commission wants at the

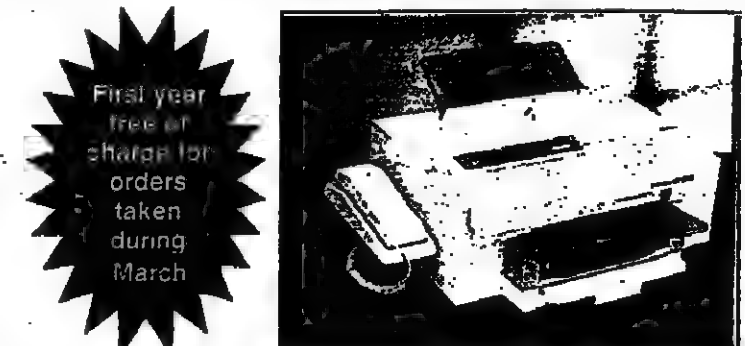
moment is written evidence that would considerably strengthen the American argument.

Last year, America's commerce department said the four EC governments had pumped \$25.9 billion of aid into Airbus since the Toulouse-based consortium was launched two decades ago. The alternative study of the American subsidies machine was made for the EC by Arnold & Porter, a Washington law firm. "From the Boeing 707 through to the supersonic and hypersonic planes of the future, US agencies have supported each technological breakthrough, often through crossover benefits of military technology for civilian purposes," it said. Unfortunately the new report now recommends that the EC does exactly the same thing.

The report is likely to fuel internal debate in the Community at a time when Jacques Delors, the commission president, is calling for increased R&D spending, a cause Britain and its free-market sympathisers are wary of lest it become an excuse to protect backward French industries from competition.

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Name _____ Position _____

ACTION LINE 081 951 4599

TODAY IN BUSINESS

TONIC NEEDED



Fisons, the pharmaceuticals group, has revealed a 17 per cent profits decline for last year after the group lost American sales for two best-selling drugs Page 19

AIMING HIGHER

Boeing has outlined plans for a new generation of "super-jumbo" to take over from the 747 jet by the year 2000 Page 19

BIG BROTHER



The creation of Britain's biggest trade union should move closer today after a vote on a report to merge three public service unions Page 21

COLLECT CALL

Alcatel Alsthom is buying the remaining 30 per cent of the world's biggest telecom equipment maker from ITT of America Page 19

LIGHTER TOUCH



Lower taxes and a lighter government burden on business are urged by the Institute of Directors Page 18

THE POUND

US dollar 1.797 (-0.0110)
German mark 2.8813 (+0.0014)
Exchange Index 90.6 (-0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKETS

FT 30 share 1987.0 (+5.8)
FT-SE 100 2565.4 (+11.1)
New York Dow Jones 3286.45 (+11.18)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 21051.71 (-436.11)

INTEREST RATES

London: Bank Base: 10 1/2%
3-month Interbank 10 1/4-10 1/2%
3-month eligible bills 9 1/2-9 3/4%
US: Prime Rate 6 1/2%
Federal Funds 4 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bills 4.04-4.02%
30-year bonds 100 1/2-100 1/4

CURRENCIES

London: New York
£: \$1.7988
£: DM2.9820
£: Sfr2.8211
£: FF9.7894
£: Yen227.58
£: Indus50.5
£: ECU1.0251
£: ECU1.40792
New York: New York
\$: £1.7400
\$: DM6.555
\$: Sfr1.5051
\$: FF6.235
\$: Yen130.80
\$: Indus51.7
\$: SDR2.788158
\$: SDR1.272012

GOLD

London: Gold
AM \$351.00 pm \$351.35
close \$351.05-351.55 (201.75-202.25)
New York: Gold
Close \$351.95-352.45

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Mar) ... \$17.10 bbl (\$17.15)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI: 136.5 January (1987=100)

* Denotes midday trading price

Reserves increase by \$181 m

By GRAHAM SEARANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

THE lack of any pressure on sterling in recent weeks allowed an underlying recovery of \$181 million in Britain's official gold and foreign exchange reserves in February, compared with a \$336 million fall in January. Of the increase, \$51 million was from the final proceeds of power privatisation.

Actual reserves rose by \$169 million to \$44.8 billion and there were no other special factors.

During the month, there were foreign currency proceeds of \$1.17 billion from the issue of eu-denominated Treasury bills but these merely offset a like total of maturing bills. A further \$11 million repayments of borrowings under the public sector exchange cover scheme are excluded from the underlying figure.

The government has been able to recoup reserves because the rise of the dollar against the mark took pressure off sterling.

The pound remains the weakest currency in the European exchange-rate mechanism. The peseta is 5.9 per cent above sterling in the range.

Hays chief sees opportunities

RONNIE Frost, the chairman and chief executive of Hays, the business services group, says businesses will suffer more pain before the recession ends. But he believes that 1992 will present opportunities for Hays to make acquisitions at sensible prices.

The group made pre-tax profits for the six months to end December of £26.8 million, down from £27.5 million. Turnover was £341 million compared with £342 million and earnings per share were static at 4.7p. The interim dividend rose 15 per cent to 1.5p.

The Times, page 20



Head for business: Peter Morgan, of the IoD, which is seeking radical change in the role of government

Directors call for a market department to replace DTI

By ROSS TIERMAN
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE Institute of Directors has called for a reorganisation of government departments dealing with business to make them more responsive to the needs of companies and individuals.

The Department of Trade and Industry should be replaced by a department for the market, while a human resources department should be created to take over the work of the employment and education departments, the institute said. The recommendations are contained in the institute's policy "shopping list" for whichever political party wins the general election. The document, *Forward to Prosperity*, was published yesterday.

Other pleas include the elimination of income tax, inheritance tax and capital

gains tax, and an extension of privatisation to include the British Waterways Board and the motorways.

The document renews the commitment of institute leaders to press for markets to be liberalised to the very limit of practicality.

Business needs a government committed to "a stable currency, the elimination of inflation and lower taxes to enable the market to deliver wealth creation and sustainable growth," the institute says.

Peter Morgan, the institute's director general, said: "The growth of a successful economy will be directly determined by the framework the government creates for markets to operate freely and for individuals to realise their full potential."

Further overhaul of government departments dealing with business is at the top of

institute priorities. "Clear redefinition of the DTI's role is required," the institute says in its report.

The company directors' organisation wants a market department to be charged with responsibility to:

□ Promote access by potential producers to domestic and foreign markets.

□ Scrutinise government policies and other departments to ensure minimum damage to business.

□ Oversee internal regulation of UK markets.

The institute's proposal to combine the education and employment departments in a human resources department would bring responsibility for all aspects of education and training under the roof of one department with a very large budget.

However, reform is needed in order to maximise the number of people attaining

higher education and winning access to training and education both before and during employment, the institute adds.

A new department is also needed to encourage flexibility of labour and wider access to employment, while encouraging a system in which more people have a financial stake in the business they work for, the report says.

In addition, the institute is keen to see closer links between funding for schools and the quality of education they provide.

It suggests the training and enterprise councils (Tecs), which have been set up to oversee instruction in skills needed by companies, should be given greater autonomy.

Those councils should also be allocated budgets over a longer time span, to help their managers with their planning, the institute said.

Problems from new offshoot slow Pifco

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH

PIFCO Holdings, the electrical goods manufacturer, saw profits before tax drop by more than two thirds in the first half.

The downturn was mostly because of problems that arose following the acquisition of Russell Hobbs Tower in April 1991. In the six months to end-October, profits before tax fell from £1.81 million to just £577,000.

Turnover rose from £12.9 million to £21.8 million and earnings fell from 16p to 5.7p. The interim dividend has been held at 3.5p.

Michael Webber, Pifco's chairman, said that in the 28 months before Pifco acquired it, Russell Hobbs Tower lost more than £30 million. The integration programme was not helped by a downturn in consumer spending.

He said that in the first half the group encountered "two sizeable problems" on quality and production relating to Russell Hobbs of toasters and a new jug kettle.

While the group has now solved the problems, Mr Webber says: "Not all RHT's customers have been patient and understanding during this period and we anticipate this view will have an impact on sales volumes in the short term."

In the UK the recession affected sales, but exports had a good first half. The core Pifco Salton Carmen business experienced a difficult six months, producing reduced turnover and profit due to the poor summer weather of 1991, which meant lower sales of Pifco fans. The Carmen haircare and personal care business was down due to soft consumer demand.

Mr Webber said that while there was still a great deal of work to be done at Russell Hobbs Tower, the subsidiary was close to breakeven. But it would take an upturn in the economy before the full benefits of the takeover deal came through. The shares rose 2p to 313p.

BUSINESS ROUND-UP

Accounting watchdog in 'goodwill' initiative

THE Accounting Standards Board is attempting to find ways of allowing companies to incorporate goodwill that has been purchased into their balance sheets permanently, unless its value has diminished. David Tweedie, the chairman of the Accounting Standards Board, said that companies would undoubtedly prefer this treatment to writing off goodwill on acquisitions instantly or over a period.

Speaking at a seminar organised by Smith New Court, the securities house, Mr Tweedie said there were legal problems as well as difficulties in assessing when the value of goodwill had fallen. "Research is at present being carried out to ascertain whether the legal obstacles can be overcome and, if so, what reliable tests could be employed to assess diminution of value," he said.

Serco aviation venture

SERCO, the international task management contractor, said it was negotiating the possible acquisition of International Aeradio, British Telecom's aviation services subsidiary. The company, which raised £9.6 million through a rights issue in November, said the acquisition would not require further funding from shareholders. Serco increased pre-tax profits from £4.3 million to £5.2 million in 1991 and lifted earnings from an adjusted 26.1p a share to 30.2p. A final dividend of 8p makes 11.9p for the year, up from 10.6p.

AAF rises to £3.9m

AAF Investment Corporation, the industrial holding company 65 per cent controlled by South Africa's W&A Investment, is paying an unchanged dividend of 11p a share for 1991 despite increased profits of £3.97 million before tax for the year, against £3.57 million in 1990. Earnings rose from 20.43p a share to 21.37p. The final dividend is held at 6p a share. The total payment includes a special dividend of 0.5p (1p), paid in respect of cash deposits. The proposed sale and leaseback of an AWI site in Kent will raise £5 million.

Edinburgh Oil buys

EDINBURGH OIL & Gas, the USM-quoted exploration and production company, is acquiring Elf UK's onshore interests for an undisclosed sum. The assets include 67.5 per cent of the Crosby Warren field and 10 per cent of the Brockham oil discovery. After the acquisition, Edinburgh will own 100 per cent of Crosby Warren, which produces 125 barrels of oil per day (bpd) and 100 million cubic feet of gas. The interest in Brockham rises from 9 to 19 per cent. The company's net production will rise above 300 bpd.

Platinum seeks £1.5m

PLATINUM, the stationery products and furniture maker, is raising £1.5 million through a share placing and open offer to take advantage of acquisition opportunities. Investors are being offered one new share for every five held at 4p each, against yesterday's opening price of 4 1/4p. There is no profit forecast, but shareholders are promised an interim dividend of 0.25p, subject to approval of capital reorganisation, for the half year ending in September. In the last full financial year Platinum lost £1.3 million before tax.



General Accident

Dividend unchanged after difficult year

| 1991 RESULTS | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Year to 31.12.91 unaudited £m | Year to 31.12.90 audited £m |
| General Premiums | 3,219.0 | 3,045.8 |
| General Underwriting Loss | (569.1) | (461.7) |
| Loss before Taxation | (171.6) | (121.3) |
| Loss attributable to Shareholders | (139.4) | (93.2) |
| Earnings per Share | (32.1p) | (21.7p) |
| Dividend per Share | 26.75p | 26.75p |
| Net Assets per Share | 316p | 330p |

- UK results suffered from recession and crime related losses but all major classes of business reported reduced losses in the fourth quarter.
- There were strong performances in many overseas territories, including Canada, the Pacific and Europe.
- Further good progress was made in Life business.
- Net investment income rose by 10.5%.
- Group is well placed to take advantage of any economic upturn.

Subject to approval at the AGM on 29th April 1992, a final dividend for 1991 of 17.05p per share (1990: 17.05p) will be paid on 14 July 1992 to shareholders registered on 8th May 1992. The total dividend for 1991 of 26.75p per share (1990: 26.75p) will cost £116.4m (1990: £115.8m). As on past occasions the directors propose to offer a scrip alternative to cash.

This announcement does not constitute the audited group accounts for 1991. Copies of the statutory group accounts, which have not yet been reported on by the auditors, will be circulated to shareholders on 8th April 1992. The statutory group accounts for 1990 have been audited without qualification and filed with the Registrar of Companies.

Details of a new Corporate FEP facility and share dealing service will be sent to shareholders along with the 1991 Report & Accounts on 8th April 1992. Shareholders wishing to invest in the FEP in the current tax year may obtain a brochure from the Company Secretary at the underlined address.

General Accident plc

General Accident plc, World Headquarters: Pitheavlis, Perth, Scotland PH2 0NH.

NI starts power sell-off

SALE contracts have been signed for Northern Ireland's four power stations as the first stage in the privatisation of Northern Ireland Electricity.

From April 1 the dual oil/coal-fired Kilroot and the coal-fired Belfast West stations will be operated by a partnership of Tractebel, the Belgian conglomerate, and Applied Energy Systems of America. British Gas is buy-

ing the oil-fired Ballylumford plant near Larne, County Antrim, which will be converted to gas supplied from mainland Britain. Ulster's remaining generating plant, the Coolkeeragh plant, is to be the subject of a buyout.

The ramp of NIE, to be known as NIE (Transmission Distribution and Supply), will be floated on the stock exchange later this year.

THE TIMES

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THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & SCIENCE

DES

Fisons poised for new man at the top as profits fall

BY MATTHEW BOND

PATRICK Egan, the man who replaced John Kerridge as executive chairman of Fisons six weeks ago, said yesterday that he expects to announce the appointment of a new chief executive for the pharmaceutical group before the company's annual general meeting in May. "I anticipate making an announcement well before our AGM on May 12," he said.

Mr Egan indicated that an appointment could come within a month, with the new chief executive assuming responsibility for the day-to-day running of the group, while he concentrated on strategy, investor relations and senior

management. Until his resignation in January on the grounds of ill health, Mr Kerridge had filled both roles.

Mr Egan was speaking as Fisons reported pre-tax profits of £191 million for 1991 more than 17 per cent down on 1990.

Virtually all the fall was due to the suspension last year by the United States Food and Drug Administration of two of Fisons best-selling drugs, Opticrom, a hay fever treatment, and Imferon, a blood product.

Mr Egan was confident that the difficulties could be overcome. "Ours is a funda-

mentally strong company and we face the future with every confidence. We have had ten years of solid growth and achievement, followed by one year of difficulty." He said he saw no reason why the company should not continue as an independent business.

The company had warned in December that the FDA's ban on the two drugs would cost it £65 million in lost profits in 1991, comprising £33 million of profits lost on American sales, a further £12 million lost on sales to Japan and £20 million of increased costs relating to the improvement required to get the ban lifted.

Yesterday, Mr Egan said that although both drugs had received clearance from the British medicines control agency, the FDA had yet to fix a date for re-inspection of the production facilities. He was confident that Opticrom would be given the all clear, but he said he was "less sanguine" about Imferon which, he pointed out, was first launched in 1957.

"Imferon is a 35-year-old property and the technology is of that time and it might be more difficult to meet the FDA's requirements." By contrast, he was confident that sales of Opticrom in the United States would resume quickly, once the FDA approval was received.

Fisons' figures made the importance of its pharmaceutical division abundantly clear. Operating profits from the scientific equipment division rose from £67.2 million to £68.4 million, including a full-year contribution from VG Instruments. Horizontal profits rose from £10.4 million to £11.2 million, again helped by acquisition.

By contrast, pharmaceutical profits fell from £152 million to £121 million on sales of £484 million. For the first time, Fisons breaks down its pharmaceutical sales by product. Initial, its established anti-asthma drug, had sales of £170 million, while Thelade, the anti-asthma drug still to gain FDA approval, generated £20 million of sales in Europe and Canada.

Despite the fall in profits the final dividend is increased from 4.65p to 5.4p, to make a total of 8.7p against 7.5p.

Temper, page 20



Telling soon: Patrick Egan



Really motoring: Sir Tom Cowie, who reported a 61 per cent leap in profits

T Cowie surges to £18.2m

BY MARTIN BARROW

T COWIE, the motor dealer, increased pre-tax profits by 61 per cent last year as lower interest rates brought relief to its finance business.

In the 12 months to end-December, pre-tax profits rose from £11.3 million to £18.21 million, returning to levels last seen in 1989 before successive increases in interest rates took their toll.

At operating level, profits were £54.5 million, down from £55.6 million, but interest charges fell from £44.65 million to £36.28 million. Sir Tom Cowie, chairman, said the results reflected "the direct and positive response of the management team in a year of extremely challenging trading conditions".

Earnings recovered from 7.22p a share to 11.18p, allowing a 35 per cent higher final dividend of 3.37p a share, making 4.85p for the year against 3.7p. The shares, which have doubled in the past year as interest rates fell, gained 3p to 138p.

The finance division, which includes Cowie Interleasing, lifted profits from £7.5 million to £10.98 million as more companies moved to purchase leasebacks enabling them to account for vehicles as an expense and not an asset, removing the risk associated with residual values.

Cowie's 20 motor dealerships raised profits from £4.82 million to £6.61 million on turnover up from £276 million to £316 million, helped by a contract to supply Hertz with 40,000 Vauxhall and Ford cars over two years. Gordon Hodgson, chief executive, said relaxing franchise restrictions, recently recommended by the monopolies commission, opened expansion opportunities.

ABB instrumentation division put up for sale

BY WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU

ABB Asea Brown Boveri, the Swedish-Swiss power engineer, is putting its international instrumentation division, whose headquarters are in Britain, up for sale.

The planned sale would include ABB's Kent instrumentation companies. The full division employs 1,500 in Britain and a further 3,000 in Germany, Italy and America. The Kent businesses are best known for the production of water meters and control valves. A spokesman for

ITT sells final stake in Alcatel for £1.9 billion

BY WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

ITT Corporation, the American conglomerate, is pulling out of the telecommunications business through the sale of its remaining 30 per cent stake in Alcatel NV, the world's largest telecommunications equipment maker, to Alcatel Alsthom, of France.

The deal is worth 2.7 billion francs (£1.9 billion) and will give the French electronics and power engineering group total control over its Netherlands-based telecom subsidiary. For ITT, the sale is part of a strategy to streamline its operational structure and make the company more attractive to investors.

The decision to sell the stake in Alcatel NV, however, was unexpected and comes only a week after Rand Araskog, the chairman, said that the company did not intend to sell the stake.

ITT will receive £1.9 billion in cash, to be paid in three instalments, and 9.1 million shares, equivalent to a 7 per cent stake in Alcatel Alsthom. The first instalment of £800 million is due this summer at the close of the deal.

The deal marks ITT's departure from the telecoms business, which it owned fully until 1986 when it sold 63 per cent, mostly to Alcatel Alsthom, then known as Compagnie Générale d'Electricité. In 1990, ITT sold another 7 per cent, and yesterday agreed to sell the remainder.

ITT's decision is seen as the beginning of further bold restructuring moves. The company has often been described as the archetypal American conglomerate, as it owns a wide array of businesses, including the Sheraton Hotel group, and companies in the financial services and insurance, forestry, electronics, defence and automotive components sectors. On the New York Stock Exchange, ITT shares opened \$3.2 higher at \$69.6 as dealers took a bullish view

of the stock and further restructuring. There has also been some speculation that ITT might use the proceeds to repurchase its shares.

As part of the arrangement, Mr Araskog will join Alcatel Alsthom's board, and has agreed not to sell ITT's 7 per cent stake for at least five years. ITT estimates the net profits of the sale to be \$400 million this year. Alcatel Alsthom will be able to consolidate Alcatel NV fully into its accounts and claims that the deal will not result in a dilution of earnings for its investors.

Redland's Steetley bid cleared

BY OUR CITY STAFF

THE hostile offer from Redland for Steetley, a fellow building materials group, has been cleared by Peter Lilley, trade and industry secretary, subject to undertakings on disposals if Redland wins.

Steetley shares closed unchanged at 380p, while Redland lost 10p to 450p. The terms on offer value each Steetley at 382 1/2p. The offer is likely to issue a final defence document, with asset valuations, by the weekend.

Redland has promised it will sell within 18 months Steetley's brick plants at Cranleigh, Surrey and Tilmanstone, Kent, and two clay tile plants at Keele and Knutsford, Staffordshire.

Staffordshire, with Steetley's clay reserves there and at Watley's Staffordshire pit if a buyer wants them. The undertakings were offered by Redland after talks with Sir Gordon Borrie, director-general of fair trading. A joint venture between Steetley and Tarmac, the building materials company, was abandoned after being referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

Nissan to export 30,000 engines

FROM KEVIN EASON IN GENEVA

NISSAN, the Japanese motor manufacturer, yesterday announced further expansion plans for its booming plant at Washington, Tyne & Wear, on the opening day of the Geneva motor show.

The plant is to supply 30,000 engines a year to Spain for use in new vehicles. Although the company could not give details of the contract, it is thought that it will add about £30 million to the £650 million already contributed to Britain's exports by Nissan.

The company said that the contract was part of its strategy to develop vehicles and components across national boundaries throughout the European Community.

An extra £53 million was invested at Washington to expand engine output. The 1.6 and 2.0 litre engines made in Britain will go into the Nissan Serena, a multi-purpose vehicle that was unveiled at the Geneva show yesterday.

Nissan's announcement comes in the wake of plans to make 175,000 cars at Washington this year, up from 124,000 in 1991, with 80 per cent for export.

The rapid rate of expansion at Nissan underlines the fears of established European motor manufacturers who see the Japanese as their most potent threat, particularly because of high productivity levels they can achieve at their new greenfield manufacturing sites.

Bob Eaton, president of General Motors in Europe, gave a warning yesterday that there would be fewer independent carmakers by the end of the decade as Japanese companies took more than a fifth of the market. Mr Eaton said the big six—Ford, GM, Peugeot, Renault, Volkswagen and Fiat—may fall to five or even three by merger.

City 'can live with single currency'

BY MARTIN WALLER

THE City of London has less to fear than other European financial centres from moves towards a single currency for Europe because the City specialises more in trading non-European currencies, in particular the dollar and yen, said Robin Leigh-Pemberton, Governor of the Bank of England, last night.

Speaking at the annual Roy Bridge Memorial Lecture at the Forex Association, Mr Leigh-Pemberton said foreign exchange markets would doubtless lose a steady and reliable source of income from intra-European exchange transactions in a monetary union. But the dollar and the yen would be of prime importance after any move to a single currency, while trade in the currencies of eastern Europe and the former Soviet

Union would increase. "There is no need for traders, brokers and other participants in the London market to look forward with trepidation," he added.

Britain's experience in the period since joining the exchange-rate mechanism had been encouraging, said Mr Leigh-Pemberton. Sterling had fluctuated within a wide band, but demand for the currency had strengthened whenever it moved down.

"Happily, the market has recognised what an unattractive policy option devaluation in the ERM would be, and the latent tensions in the ERM have remained latent," he added.

In the long run, it is on episodes like this that the credibility of the ERM is built.

BA asks Boeing for flying fitness

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH Airways is helping to design a new 600-seat jetliner that could take over from the Boeing 747 jumbo on many of the world's most important international air routes by the turn of the century.

The airline has told Boeing that it would need about 20 of the new jets by the year 2010 and would expect to pay \$175 million each. They would expect them to include revolutionary ideas for business travellers including an on-board gymnasium, a business centre and a central restaurant.

Richard Albrecht, vice-president of Boeing, said that BA would be among a small committee of airlines to submit detailed requirements before the new jet, probably a "double decker" powered by four powerful engines now being used on twin engine jets—was launched as a viable project.

The European plane-making consortium Airbus Industrie has said that it

too is hoping to develop a new generation of super-jumbo capable of meeting the expected surge in demand for air travel over the next decade.

Mr Albrecht said, however, that the decision to go ahead with the Boeing version would not be taken until a potential market had been confirmed and the "many problems", including the creation of new terminals capable of handling so many passengers at any one time, had been solved.

Despite the recession that has led to almost 1,000 jets being stored due to lack of passenger demand, Boeing is confident of the long-term growth in demand for new aircraft. With global air travel likely to increase by an average of 5.2 per cent a year for the next 20 years, they say, orders for more than 11,000 aircraft worth £490 billion will be placed by 2010.

Mr Albrecht admitted, however, that many airlines now losing money heavily would find it difficult to finance their aircraft in the future. "The sources of that finance may change but any airline

which is capable of demonstrating that they can make a profit by buying a new aircraft will be able to find that finance from one source or another," he said optimistically. "Someone, somewhere is going to provide it."

Stephen Wolf, chairman of United Airlines, has fiercely attacked governments for protecting weak airlines. "Competition and consolidation go together," he told the Royal Aeronautical Society in London. Governments, he said, were acting like handicappers in a horse race, adding weight to the swiftest so that even the slowest could stay in the race. This made for a more exciting race but it did nothing for real economic competition.

He said governments should not try to impose rules that "make us keep weak rivals artificially in the field at great expense to ourselves, airlines passengers and the world economy. Requiring stronger competitors to pull their punches... raises costs and seriously reduces their ability to compete internationally."

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INTERIM FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Half Year to 31 December 1991 (Unaudited)

| | 1990 | 1991 |
|--|--------|--------|
| OPERATING PROFIT | £27.7m | £27.5m |
| PROFIT ATTRIBUTABLE TO HAYS SHAREHOLDERS | £17.8m | £18.0m |
| EARNINGS PER SHARE | 4.7p | 4.7p |
| NET DIVIDEND PER SHARE INCREASED 15% | 1.3p | 1.5p |

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THE BUSINESS SERVICES GROUP

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| | |
|---|--|
| INSTEM (Fin) Pre-tax: £1.01m (£1m) EPS: 15.2p (14p) Div: 1.8p, mkg 3p | PREVIOUS TOTAL DIVIDEND: 2.85p. Turnover rose 42% to £15.8m. Company gives warning that 1992 will be a challenging year. |
| HAMPDEN HOMECARE Pre-tax: £1.31m EPS: 6.37p (2p) Div: 1.8p, mkg 2p | Final results. Previous year's profits were £506,000 and total dividend was 0.2p. Turnover rose 15% to £26.1m. |
| INTEREUROPE TECH. Pre-tax: £814,000 EPS: 7.95p (8.1p) Div: 2p (2p) | Interim results. Last year's profits were £842,000. Turnover fell from £8.36m to £5.41m. |

| | |
|--|--|
| ADMIRAL (Fin) Pre-tax: £3.47m (£3.28m) EPS: 21.9p (19.4p) Div: 3.3p, mkg 4.8p | Total dividend last time was 4.2p. Turnover was £26.1m, up from £21.2m. Opportunities are being pursued in Singapore. |
| MICROFILM REPRO. (Int) Pre-tax: £3.81m (£3.61m) EPS: 4.58p (4.33p) Div: 1.44p (1.2p) | Turnover rose from £16.07m to £16.34m. Dividend increase reflects progress made in the first six months. |
| NEW CAVENTISH (Int) Pre-tax: £161,715 EPS: 1.08p (0.04p) Div: Nil (nil) | Net rental income rose from £407,951 to £455,730. Pre-tax profit last year was £5,258. |

Economic indicators give Dow early boost

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General Accident over the worst

General Accident is displaying the sort of cheerful noises that bespeak a company confident that it is putting its house in order. The market was relieved that GA maintained its dividend, which leaves its shares yielding 7.8 per cent even after a rise yesterday. A cut would have been a shock, even though the loss per share was even more than the dividend and the group's relatively comfortable solvency margin, like others, now depends too much on the market value of its investments. GA is the piggy in the middle of the mortgage indemnity losses at Royal Sun Alliance and BAT's Eagle Star. GA's maintained dividend will make a decision to cut even tougher for Guardian Royal Exchange, though GA was not tempted to ape Commercial Union, and probably Sun Alliance, in boldly raising its payment.

Under the surface, however, GA has been doing some hefty repair work from its Perth fortress. The group made a himpy bed for itself by its venture into New Zealand banking and by building an ambitious chain of estate agencies, still making big losses, to help develop its relatively under-sized life business. The New Zealand bank has at last been closed, leaving a highly profitable general insurance business and a useful life interest.

At home, administration has been rationalised, much of it going back to Scotland, and general slimming has produced most of the 23 per cent cut in staff numbers that should have been achieved by the end of the year. Domestic losses are clearly falling, ahead of most rivals, thanks to biting the bullet as price leader on motor premiums. GA is even entertaining more business in mortgage indemnity, possibly with Nationwide building society, though on a controlled basis with less limits. Results have improved elsewhere, though there are doubts over the big American account.

These solid returns from action are encouraging and GA has better control of much of its business by its emphasis on personal lines. Weather related disasters, or even a dive in stock markets, could intervene but the group looks over the worst. Further ahead, there are still strategic problems. The life business remains small and, as Commercial Union has shown, can be vital to a successful composite. Though well-spread, GA is also relatively under-represented on the continent, which could leave it vulnerable in trading and to predators. At least management can now begin to look ahead.

Devolving taxes

Few potential Chancellors would be willing to give up some of their fiscal options even before they came to power. John Smith, who may be less than two months from Number 11, was happy yesterday to admit over a lunch of the Newspaper Press Fund that the centralisation of Britain's economy, both fiscal and political, had gone too far. He noted that the Germans, whose decentralisation had been foisted on them by the victorious Allies in 1945, were now astonished to find that a British Chancellor could — as Norman Lamont might well do on Tuesday — raise per cent duty throughout the country "from midnight". In Federal Germany, such a move would involve detailed discussion with the Länder. The pro-devolution Smith, in a declaration of support for a more "mature and sensitive" democracy, declared himself willing to devolve central Treasury control in certain areas of taxation in favour of discussion and debate with the regions — in effect, an element of local taxation. This approach would certainly reduce the artificial and stagey "last but not policy" feel of the traditional Budget speech.

Women can find a powerful voice through Britain's biggest union

Liza Donaldson
reports on how Nalco, Nupe and Cohse have reached a critical point in their quest to form a new super-union

A special conference of members of the National and Local Government Officers Association will today vote on a report that should pave the way for the creation of the biggest trade union in Britain and the biggest public services union in Europe. This will mark a critical point in a three-year debate on whether Nalco should merge with the National Union of Public Employees and Cohse, the health services union.

There would still be hurdles to cross at the three unions' conferences this summer and in a ballot of their 1.4 million members in the autumn. If the three-way merger is finally consummated on schedule in July next year, the unnamed new union will have two unusual characteristics for a leading British trade union: it will be overwhelmingly composed of and run by women, a change already leading through to the bargaining table, and, unlike the other big unions, it will not be affiliated to the Labour party, though it will keep traditional Labour links.

The new union will cover a wide range of public services, with nearly a million members in a devoted local government section and more than 400,000 in health. The services range from the delivery of school meals to the management of hospitals and the local councils. Members would include low-paid part-timers on £3,000 a year, to council chief executives earning more than £70,000; it would represent home help for the elderly, planners and road engineers, librarians, nurses and social workers.

Women, given proportional representation for the first time through union structures, will dominate the new union, comprising 1 million members — more than a third of all women trade unionists in Britain. This feminine regiment will effectively become the most powerful women's organisation in the country.

The reasons for the merger, according to Lord McCarthy, of Nuffield College, Oxford, are "largely defensive" in response to falling membership. Figures released last year by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development show that the number of trade union members, as a proportion of the workforce, plummeted in every major industrial country to an average of 28 per cent by 1988. In Britain, it then stood at 41 per cent. Public sector representation remains higher than private with about 64 per cent of council employees unionised.

Merger will confirm the trend towards larger unions, Lord McCarthy said, pointing to the anticipated vote in favour of a merger between



The union makes us strong: Nupe nurses may soon join forces with Cohse and Nalco

the engineers in the AEU and the electricians in the EETPU, expected today to form a 1-million strong union. Closer ties are also being forged between the two rival, male-dominated general unions, the TGWU and GMB, comprising 2 million members.

Union leaders involved in the public sector merger have emphasised the positive joining of three "strong, independent unions". Nupe and Cohse have, however, certainly lost members, especially in manual sectors subject to the government's legislative drive for compulsory competitive tendering. In Nalco, however, membership, which has been busy implementing the poll tax and a flood of other legislation, has held steady in the last year, edging up to 760,000. In part, this reflects a 20 per cent growth in white-collar council jobs in the last decade.

At Nupe, which has a long history of being committed to a one-industry union for public services, Rodney Bickerstaffe, its general secretary, said: "There is generally a rationalisation of the trade unions in Britain, in Europe and Australia." Weaned on union ideals by his mother, a school meals organiser, he believes the new union is an idea whose time has come. He has admitted to being "sick and tired" of the duplication of services, the division

over tactics and the waste of financial resources of having three separate unions.

Mr Bickerstaffe, also current president of the TUC, says the general election and its aftermath will affect the climate in which the new union will have to operate but says: "Its creation will be a powerful push towards strengthening the relationship with employers. Indeed, we believe many employers will welcome it."

Employers in the largest sector affected, local government, have yet to meet to formulate a view. A recent pay strategy document lists the proposed merger among "additional areas of concern". But Alwyn Rea, president of the Society of Chief Personnel Officers in local government, said: "It might ease the relationship, because the unions will be speaking with one voice, rather than three. It might facilitate agreements. The need to go back to three separate sets of members will no longer be necessary." While a leaked NHS document stated: "It would be very difficult for any self-governing trust to resist recognition of such a large organisation."

Hector MacKenzie, general secretary of Cohse, is vehement that the new union will not lead to inflation-

ary pay push. "We are about improving the pay and conditions of our members. It is in our interests to keep inflation down."

The new union has its critics, the most vocal of whom are internal. The merger is being fought most strongly within the richest union, Nalco, which has assets worth £64 million against Nupe's £17 million and Cohse's £10 million. Insiders claim there is an "unholy alliance" between the ultra-left, seeking to wreck the merger, and the right.

Peter Hunter, a member of the Nalco executive who is an administrative officer at Fylde District Council and local government vice-chairman of the 10,000-strong Conservative Trade Unionists (CTU), denies any alliance with "strange bedfellows", but insists the case for merger has not been made. He says it is "waffle" to suggest the new union will be politically independent. There would be two political funds — one Labour and the other neutral — to accommodate Nupe and Cohse's current affiliation to Labour and Nalco's non-affiliated status.

Mr Hunter also opposes the creation of a giant union because he thinks the partners are incompatible, spanning bosses and workers — "a classless society which does not exist in the real world". The super-

union would be an unwieldy, political juggernaut, he maintains, and would "play right into the hands of the militants".

Like other Nalco Conservatives, Mr Hunter is unhappy about moves to give women proportional representation throughout its structures, viewing this as a "restriction on freedom". He is also unhappy that part-timers, mainly women, could play such a powerful role because part-time employees might have a part-time commitment and completely distort the face of the organisation.

This last claim particularly irritates Mr Bickerstaffe, whose union is renowned in the trade union movement for championing part-timers and women's rights — an area largely ignored by many unions until recently. He says the view that part-timers are somehow "more apathetic" is objectionable. Tom Sawyer, his deputy general secretary who is also chairman of the Labour party's influential home policy committee, insists the new union will not be affiliated to the Labour party. He said: "There is no one more publicly associated with the Labour party than I am. But I am not looking for wholesale union affiliation or a ballot to be pushed on affiliation." Members, he stresses, can opt to join the Labour affiliated political fund (and so be represented at the party conference) or the non-affiliated fund within the new union.

In line with Labour's desire for a more arm's-length relationship with the unions, he adds: "From my point of view, we have got to have a union which is more pluralistic. I think people need a new vision of trade unions which will encompass much wider scope of views and opinions."

Keith Brown, CTU chairman, is not convinced. Not only would the new union be used as a "campaigning machine" for the Labour party, it might also bring a repeat of the 1979 "winter of discontent", he argues. Mr MacKenzie, of Cohse, dismissed the notion: "While I will not say industrial action will never happen, we are not about creating winners of discontent. That is an old agenda. We have a new one and that is about proper, fair collective bargaining systems, which will avoid the need for industrial action." He points to the ambulance dispute in which a work-to-rule kept public sympathy and won a measure of success. "After all," he adds, "it is pointless to be campaigning for a better health service and then injure the health service."

Alan Jinkinson, of Nalco, says the new union will be more streamlined and will have economies of scale to offer better services to members. He adds: "Our proposals are radical and exciting. I am proud to be involved in this historic occasion, creating Britain's biggest and best trade union which no government and no employer can ignore."

The acid test will come at the ballot box vote, as the potential 1.4 million voters decide whether bringing the three unions together will give them better services, free of party political rhetoric.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Cost of change at Exchange

LETTERS from Stock Exchange chairman Andrew Hugh Smith have been landing on members' doormats this week — in alphabetical order — inviting them to subscribe to The Securities Institute, the body that will replace exchange membership, from March 31, for individuals as opposed to corporate entities. The letter cites the "steady decline in the status attached to individual membership of the Stock Exchange" and says that it "has become clear that the Stock Exchange can no longer operate effectively as a professional body for its individual members". But while Hugh Smith's bid to get members to accept membership of the institute is likely to be largely successful, he is also going to be faced with a demand from the membership, for their £10,000 payments, usually made on their sixtieth birthday or at the time of their death — which ever comes first — to be paid in full before the end of March. "If they are going to disband the membership, they should pay us our money now," says one irate stockbroker, who has been lobbying colleagues and receiving unanimous support. Given that the membership is about 5,400, a full settlement would cost the exchange £54 million.

Small is better

THERE is light at the end of the recessionary tunnel, according to Brian Winterlood, of Winterlood Securities, the specialist smaller companies market maker. "We are cer-



tainly seeing a better feel to business and people are starting to look at smaller companies again," he says. "And certainly the potential is enormous in smaller companies if there is a recovery." Winterlood, famed for his caution, is now so optimistic that he has increased the number of smaller company stocks in which Winterlood Securities deals by 150 to 870. "We hope to be up to 1,000 by the year-end," he adds. To cope with this additional workload, the firm has recruited another dealer, Andy Joad, aged 27, who, previously worked for Wint. erlood's old firm, Bisgood Bishopp, bought by County NatWest.

Endurance medal

TERRY Young, dubbed the "trusty lieutenant" by his boss, investment manager Brian Banks, who runs and owns Guildhall Investment Management, is still awaiting his endurance medal after serving Banks loyally for 20 years. Young, aged 42, who passed the historic milestone on Friday, holds the title of investment executive within Banks' organisation, but is generally regarded as

Banks' minder. Six feet three inches tall, and a former rugby No 8, Young, a bachelor, towers over his boss. His potentially intimidating image is, however, softened by his penchant for Benetton clothes. Banks, meanwhile, recalls the time when, in January 1979, a rather more formal shirt, worn by Young, was ripped as he fought his way through the throng at Barclays Bank, to lodge an application for gifts on behalf of his then employer, Britannia Arrow — which is where he first worked under Banks. "They went to a 30 or 40 per cent premium on day one and everybody was desperate to get some," says Banks. "There was such a scum that it was called the Battle of Watling Street." Banks, who had by then formed his own firm, was so delighted by the premium that he awarded his staff a £1,000 bonus per person. For Young's extraordinary effort, Britannia Arrow, then, under the command of Lord Rippon, presented him with a tankard instead. He left Britannia for Banks' employ at the earliest opportunity.

Election nerves

ANYONE unaware of the fact that a general election is imminent would have had their ignorant state unceremoniously ended on Monday. Michael Howard, employment secretary, cancelled a press briefing, scheduled to be held at the Department of the Environment's offices in Cannon Street. The Liberal Democrats, however, carried on regardless. They sent out a press release, reacting to his non-existent briefing.

CAROL LEONARD

Pension trustees

From Mr R. Manwaring
Sir, Whilst the Maxwell scandals are fresh in our minds, may I, as a former pensions specialist, put in a plea for a very radical piece of legislation to ensure, as far as is humanly possible, that another Maxwell does not occur.

Trusteeship is always a debatable point, particularly when one considers that pensions are, in general, provided by employers and therefore they should have a say in the nature of the benefits etc. However, it has often been argued that pensions are deferred pay and, as employees have no say in how an employee spends his salary, they should have no say in how the pension fund is administered in terms of benefits and surpluses. Leave that to the trustees. Custodian trustees are, in my view, the ideal solution but, in any event, I strongly feel that in future no member of the board of a company should be a trustee since, with the best will in the world, trustees are inhibited from acting independently if, effectively, they are governed by the directors.

We all realise that another Maxwell is unlikely and also that his powers to dictate to his fellow trustees were absolute, but in order to safeguard against the unlikely happening of another pension fund disaster, it seems worthwhile being bold and radical in framing legislation. Pension advisers are naturally professional people but they are paid by the company and therefore they cannot be expected to advise entirely impartially on trusteeship and it would be better if the matter were subject to legislation and there was no argument.

RANDIE MANWARING, Marbles Barn, Newick, East Sussex.

Why democracy has died at AGMs

From Major R. Freeman

Sir, The outgoing comments by Clive Gilchrist, the chairman of the investment committee, at the National Association of Pension Funds, on February 27, 1992, indicate why democracy has died at most company AGMs some time ago.

a. At least 24 per cent of managers of pension funds did not exercise proxy votes at all at company meetings.

b. The association proposes to provide a sifting service, where it would look through company reports and cir-

A European banana that is no stranger

From Mr Myles Glover

Sir, In defining the "European banana" as a fruit grown in the Caribbean ex-colonies of France and Britain", the article in the Business section of The Times (March 2) is misleading.

It is no doubt true that ex-colonial Caribbean ones are the only European bananas to depend, as a "strange fruit", on privilege for access to European Community countries. But surely bananas from the Canary Islands, which in this context must be thought equally exotic, are no

BA seen as a predator in goldfish bowl

From Mr H. Bamberg

Sir, BA and Virgin appear to be in more than an ordinary competitive situation and feel it important to comment in the light of my own experience as chairman of British Eagle International Airlines in the Sixties.

Of the large number of British airlines founded in the post-World War Two period, most have gone out of business. In 1966, the government commissioned the Edwards committee report to recommend methods of regulating competition and licensing of British airlines. Its debate in Parliament and implementation in 1969 were too late to save British Eagle and BUA, which were two of the best airlines of that time.

BOAC and BEA, then the nationalised predecessors of BA, subjected the independent airlines to intense pressures which were scarcely normal competition. To wit — putting excessive capacity on domestic trunk routes, known as "sandwiching and swamping" or in more polite language, wasteful duplication, when Eagle, for instance, were permitted only a limited frequency of two flights per day.

Yours faithfully, HAROLD BAMBERG, Harewood Park, Buckhurst Road, Stanninghill, Ayr, Berkshire.

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| 1991/92 | | Company | Price (\$) | Chg. % | Net \$ | Yld. % |
|---------|------|----------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| High | Low | | | | | |
| 493 | 108 | Procidio | 188 | ... | ... | 3.0 |
| 310 | 163 | Ranger | 408 | ... | ... | 1.2 |
| 4912 | 2731 | Royal Dutch Pl | 4437 | +34 | ... | 2.6 |
| 4262 | 2037 | Schellenger | 3225 | 1 | ... | 5.1 |
| 546 | 479 | Shell | 451 | +5 | 20.9 | 0.2 |
| 5 | 2 | Target Res | 4 | ... | ... | ... |
| 34 | 13 | Tenneco | 139 | ... | ... | ... |
| 114 | 52 | Trigon Europe | 52 | ... | ... | ... |
| 358 | 227 | Ultramar | 245 | +10 | 10.5 | 5.7 |
| 197 | 102 | Woodside | 171 | ... | ... | 1.3 |

| PAPER, PRINT, ADVERTISING | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----|----------------|-----|-----|---------|
| 148 | 76 | API | 143 | ... | 7.0 |
| 21 | 11 | ATA Scientific | 13 | ... | 10.103 |
| 292 | 168 | Auto Wings | 248 | + 0 | 8.3 4.5 |
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| | | Acin Group | 24 | ... | 8.4 |
| 154 | 10 | Addition Corp | 144 | ... | 1.4 |
| 244 | 100 | Aeger Gp | 114 | + 1 | 3.8 6.8 |
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| 170 | 200 | South West | 348 | + 3 | 17.5 | 6.7 | 5 |
| 392 | 203 | Shasta Water | 341 | + 3 | 17.7 | 6.9 | 5 |
| 392 | 202 | South West | 372 | + 3 | 17.7 | 6.9 | 5 |
| 397 | 223 | Tennessee Water | 352 | + 5 | 20.0 | 7.4 | 5 |
| 422 | 241 | Wahkiakum Water | 383 | + 6 | 17.3 | 6.1 | 4 |
| 436 | 325 | Wagon Water | 414 | - | 19.5 | 6.7 | 5 |
| 431 | 335 | Yachukwa W | 401 | + 1 | 17.7 | 5.9 | 7 |

Source: First

♦ USM: # of suspensions ÷ Ex dividend; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex
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 distributions on Figures or report twinned; ... No
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WOMEN
How Anna
Massey found
Hard Heart
and true love

LIFE & TIMES

WEDNESDAY MARCH 4 1992

MEDIA
Tough times
ahead for
television's
young talent



Music teaching out of time

WERNER BOKELBERG/IMAGE BANK

**Alexander Goehr
calls for an end to
the prejudices that
have marked a
raucous debate
about the future of
music in schools**

Today the time allowed by Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, for consultation over the proposed national curriculum for music comes to an end. "Consultation" there certainly has been, if by that we mean the flood of letters, articles and advertising in the national press advocating the merits of one side or another. If nothing else, this dispute shows how far we have come in establishing music as a general subject for school children. The matters being so hotly debated are a long way away from the "music appreciation" classes and singing of "Men of Harlech" which were once all there was.

What led to the dispute? First came the decision to include music in the national curriculum. An "advisory" report was brought out by a working group chaired by Sir John Manduell, principal of the Royal Northern College of Music. It was rejected and replaced by a "timid" proposal from the national curriculum Council, which, it is rumoured, had been drawn up by non-musicians.

There followed what now looks like a campaign of protest, with letters to the Press from many well-known musicians, orchestrated by Simon Razlie, as well as from educators.

The area of contention is now well defined. On the one side is a "practical", culturally diverse syllabus based on making music in the classroom, playing, singing and composing as well as learning to appreciate not only Western classical music but a wide range of popular and ethnic music. On the other is a more traditional course designed to increase understanding of the great works of the Western heritage and the techniques that lie behind them. There the matter rests; now the minister has to make a decision.

In the past, music classes imitated other arts subjects. English was deemed to consist, first, of reading and writing, the composition of short essays, the study of great books and gradually some insight into what follows what and how authors, schools and movements connect. By analogy, children learn to read music, sing from the printed text, do a bit of harmony. Then they apply this knowledge to listening, sometimes even with a score, and "appreciating" by describing what they have heard and learning to recognise musical forms.

All this did and does take place in classrooms. Under this system, learning to play an instrument is generally considered to require one-to-one contact, and is left as an extra to be paid for by parents and generally arranged through private teachers. This kind of personal music-making depends on the attitudes and abilities of parents, assisted by national stan-



Sound technique: One school of thought says it is a teacher's job to impart skills and the pupil's right to decide how to use them, while another promotes appreciation of a wide range of ethnic music

dards organised through the Associated Board, which organises grade examinations. These are taken into account when children are considered for university entrance. In addition to A-levels.

This scheme worked, more or less, but is open to damaging criticism. Middle-class children are often favoured by a system which depends on family support. Moreover, most urban environments nowadays are saturated with music that has almost nothing to do with the music used in the classroom. Children might well get the impression that "taught" music is complicated and dull by comparison, that it does not connect with their musical experience in the world outside and can safely be ignored.

They may then ask why they should not have the music they like in the classroom. Often they will regard the children who do respond to classroom music as a select and effete minority.

Teachers, too, dislike delivering only what is deemed to be "good" for the pupil. So they too support some modifications that nod towards the popular culture which now prevails.

Valuable support for a liberal and practical attitude has come from modern composers in the world of high art music. Such figures as Hindemith and Orff in the 1920s, and later Bartók, Kodály and (in this country) Britten and Maxwell Davies, have all in various ways concerned them-

selves with the development of new musical means for class-teaching. Although different in style, they all addressed themselves to collective classroom music-making. This often involved the use of easy-to-play and popular instruments such as percussion, recorders and guitars, for which no traditional ensemble music exists in the classical canon. They composed the music, and encouraged the pupils to improvise their own and to write it down.

This kind of activity is seen as a viable alternative to other methods, is not financially prohibitive and excites the children. The problem about it is that only very special teachers can make it work. Furthermore, it is hard to sustain the initial excitement and lead the pupils forward to more discriminating and varied musical experiences.

At the same time, what started as ad hoc local arrangements for instrumental tuition in the schools led to a local-government financed system of peripatetic teachers attached to a central authority and run as a school-support system. In its turn, this led to school orchestras (especially in the new, larger comprehensive), special courses and Saturday schools for the eager and talented.

From such arrangements grew the famous schools orchestras such as those of Leicestershire and the London Schools. The gradu-

ates of these arrangements found their way into the National Youth Orchestras and the European Community Youth Orchestras - in which, I am told, negative discrimination had to be employed against British youngsters to give others a chance.

The relic of all this still exists and the astonishing achievements of young British musicians are apparent. Nor are these youngsters just players. The universities

are now full of them and most academic music courses have had to adapt themselves to the needs of a new, almost professional type of student.

The Manduell proposal fairly represents all these developments, together with what is known as "world music", the label used to redefine musical culture without overt ethno-centrism. The consequence is a re-evaluation of the Western tradition.

This may have contributed to the Manduell report's rejection. There is only so much time

available for music, and pupils are busy. It is better to do a little thing well than slough around in an unlimited and undefinable morass of half-absorbed and necessarily superficial cultural phenomena.

Traditionalists, the educationists of the former communist regimes, and most Asian schools seem to believe that Western classical music has something unique to offer. In Asia, Western music has been separated from its ethnic origins and is now regarded as world music, belonging to everybody. While we, full of guilt for our imperialist past, want to make welcoming gestures of broad-mindedness and tolerance, the Asians know that to get on, you have to have skills and techniques, never mind their origins. They will win this race as they win most others.

The Manduell report takes a culturalist position, which is where I believe it falls down. It does not set out with the basic aim of equipping children with the means to become literate musically; nor does it sufficiently isolate what factors contribute to the acquisition of skills.

The best judges in these matters will be the teachers themselves. They can only teach what they themselves know, and the example of personal enthusiasm will carry weight with pupils.

The only thing a national curriculum should do is define

standards. It should prescribe the nature of skills, the conditions of musical literacy (not a simple thing to define). The consultation documents and regulations should be cast in the form of model tests and confine themselves to this. To do this is to avoid the present situation, which only reveals the prejudices of the various combatants in the dispute - and sometimes reveals their embarrassing ignorance.

We should not forget the limitations of education. It is the teachers' job to provide tools and the competence to use them, and the pupils' right to decide how and for what purpose to apply them. At all costs let us avoid ramshackle schemes based on dubious ideologies, unrealistic at the best of times. If we cannot do any better, why not leave things to develop by themselves and concern ourselves with restoring to the battered teachers the sense of mission and enthusiasm they might once have had?

What can the minister now do? To start with, he could be a Tory. Followers of this philosophy tell me that two of its basic tenets are to limit government intervention where it has no business to be, and to allow pointless businesses to die, while supporting successful enterprises. So let him limit his interventions to essential areas, which I define as those concerned with standards of skill and competence.

But more urgent is the need to reinstate the successful support

systems created by the local authorities. It is unlikely that the government intentionally killed them. The plight of the peripatetics results from battles fought against local authorities and the effort to paint the comprehensive (in which the most extraordinary musical developments were located) in the blackest possible light.

It is not too late to save the peripatetic systems and, heaven knows, they are a successful enterprise. The bullish minister should use some of his assertiveness at the Treasury to achieve this.

There has been little joy in the present dispute, apart from the research pleasure of reading a letter from Pierre Boulez about Welsh music education in an advert paid for by Andrew Lloyd Webber. "Progressive" and "reactionary" teams have kicked half-truths about, when the ball seems to be out of play. Let us introduce some hard realities into the discussion.

© The author is professor of music at Cambridge University

INSIDE

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TOMORROW:
The End of History debate

The prevailing notion of the lone woman traveller seems to have been fixed about a century ago, and entails such heart-stopping intrepidity and pluck that there is not much in our banal modern lives to touch it. I mean, compared with the achievement of striding across the Andes armed only with a pocket bible and a big stick, the modern-day purchase of an air-ticket to Los Angeles is like looking rather paltry, isn't it? And compared with Amelia Earhart flying solo across the Atlantic in a rattling crate with nothing but a soup-thermos and a star-map, the modern woman's stout-hearted endurance of an 11-hour scheduled flight (complete with movies and drinks) is emphatically nothing to write home about.

Intrepidity is relative, however. To me, the acme of being brave is catching a bus in central London after 9pm, or enduring a whole instalment of *Just a Minute* on Radio 4. So it was only natural that when I booked my single ticket to LA before Christmas I was so transported by a moment's pluckiness that for a moment I thought I smelled quinine and hars-horn in the air. So Amelia Earhart's soap, I thought: this feels great. How brave and adventurous I am, to travel alone! I nearly phoned up Maria Aiken to suggest she make a documentary.

All alone on an LA highway

SINGLE LIFE
Lynne Truss on
the advantages
of being an
unaccompanied
traveller

This was the first thing I learnt about solitary travel, by the way: that the habit of tireless (and bogus) self-congratulation starts at the ticket desk and never wears off. "Hey, I made it!" you say proudly, as you step off the plane, having done nothing more heroic during the flight than slobber in the loo a couple of times. "Wow, I collected my luggage from the carousel! I found my hotel! I had some M&M's from the mini-bar! I turned on the TV and it worked!" This exclamatory tone is a bit relentless, I'm afraid. "I hired



a car! I looked someone up in the telephone directory! I ate a bagel in Santa Barbara!" And so on.

Travelling *à deux* does not encompass this splendid sense of perpetual infantile achievement. I don't know why. Travelling *à deux*, in fact, is generally a much more sober and grown-up affair, with precision map-reading not only its greatest measure of success but also (alas) its highest goal.

"Nicely map-read dear," says the driver, calmly applying the handbrake.

"Well, thanks very much. It

got a bit tricky around Nuneaton, but I think I kept my head."

"We didn't get lost at all, did we?"

"No, we didn't."

The advantages to travelling alone are many, as I discovered. For one thing, you can listen to old-Beach Boys hits on the car radio without your passenger huffily twiddling with FM to find something else. Secondly, you can take art galleries at your own pace (at a brisk roller-skating speed, if preferred) without feeling guilty. Thirdly, you can browse in shops without first devising an hour's alternative entertainment for your companion (who will otherwise stand next to the door looking helpless, like a caged puppy). And fourthly, you can choose a route for your journey without your companion suddenly spotting a scenic wiggle detour just a few miles short of your destination.

The main disadvantage - as I also discovered - is that when travelling on fast roads at night it is impossible to drive and navigate at the same time. Something to do with the number of hands, I think. Consequently, on a simple trip across town to Pasadena, you can get so deeply lost on the freeway system that you think the night will swallow you up (just like poor old Amelia Earhart) and that your cat at home will die of broken hearts

waiting for your return. Such terrors are feeble, no doubt, compared with those of the stout Victorian lady wandering lost in the deserts of Arabia, describing huge ragged circles in the shifting sands. But I can assure you that the cry "I don't want to go to Glendale!" represents the nearest I have ever got to a nervous breakdown.

Perhaps map-reading real-

ly is what holidays are about - strenuously mastering streetplans, so that one can always find the route back to the bus station. I admit that maps obsess me; as a founder member of Cartomaniacs Anonymous, I resent and refute the theory that women are generally incapable of reading maps (although I rather like the notion of dangling a copy of the

London A-Z over a pregnant woman, to determine the gender of the unborn child. If the foetus shrugs and turns its back, murmuring "Ach, I'm sure you'll find it" it is probably a boy.

So no wonder my night of terror in Los Angeles made such an impression on me: every time I braked abruptly at the sight of yet another freeway approach, all my

maps slid off the passenger seat on to the floor. Moreover, when I reached inside the glove compartment for harts-horn, there was never any there. *Alone and Disoriented Without a Smelling Bottle in Glendale.* Perhaps I should make the call to Maria Aiken, after all.

TOMORROW
Private Life: John Diamond

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New designs on national treasures

ARCHITECTURE

Michael Hopkins, who is transforming the appearance of such sacred English sites as Glyndebourne and Lord's Cricket Ground, talks to Marcus Binney

Michael Hopkins can boast what is probably the best, and certainly the most high-profile, order-book in British architecture. A fortnight ago he won the competition for the inland Revenue's huge new complex beneath Nottingham Castle. Last week the wraps were taken off his plans for new parliamentary offices beside Westminster Bridge. His £30 million remodelling of Glyndebourne Opera House is well under way. London Under-

cisely because he had the challenge of introducing a new main front between Sir Albert Richardson's remarkable traditional façades of the Fifties. At Bedford Lakes, by contrast, Hopkins has designed an office campus in the manner of Mies van der Rohe's Illinois Institute of Technology. "I'm very keen to develop a low-budget architecture using simple repetitive detailing. I'm sure this is the way to go."

Many modern buildings of the Sixties and Seventies look mean outside, partly because of the low ceiling heights. Hopkins points out that, with their requirements for computer cabling and air conditioning, today's offices offer the architect more generous dimensions. "The materials available today are also much better than in the Sixties. All sealants and paints are much more reliable."



Michael Hopkins: a modernist, but with a sense of context

ground has chosen him as architect for major developments above Tottenham Court Road and Victoria Underground stations; and in May, Bedford Lakes opens. It is a big new business park near Heathrow, which he has designed jointly with Edward Cullinan and partners.

While Sir Norman Foster, Sir Richard Rogers and James Stirling have earned much of their reputation with key buildings abroad, Hopkins so far has built exclusively in England (and is best known for his new Mound Stand at Lord's Cricket Ground). At a time when architects are divided into warring camps, Hopkins wins the admiration of both sides. He is a modernist, a master of high-tech, but respected because of his strong sense of context.

"Context is one of the great adjustments. All our early buildings were on open sites, where you can simply park them in the landscape. When you move into town, many more forces, social and physical, come into play," he says.

"You find a clue in neighbouring sites. At Nottingham we have taken the 19th century street pattern across the canal to the Revenue site. There will be open streets which the public can walk through."

His remodelling of Bracken House, the old Financial Times building opposite St Paul's Cathedral, is the more interesting pre-

cedent because he had the challenge of introducing a new main front between Sir Albert Richardson's remarkable traditional façades of the Fifties. At Bedford Lakes, by contrast, Hopkins has designed an office campus in the manner of Mies van der Rohe's Illinois Institute of Technology. "I'm very keen to develop a low-budget architecture using simple repetitive detailing. I'm sure this is the way to go."

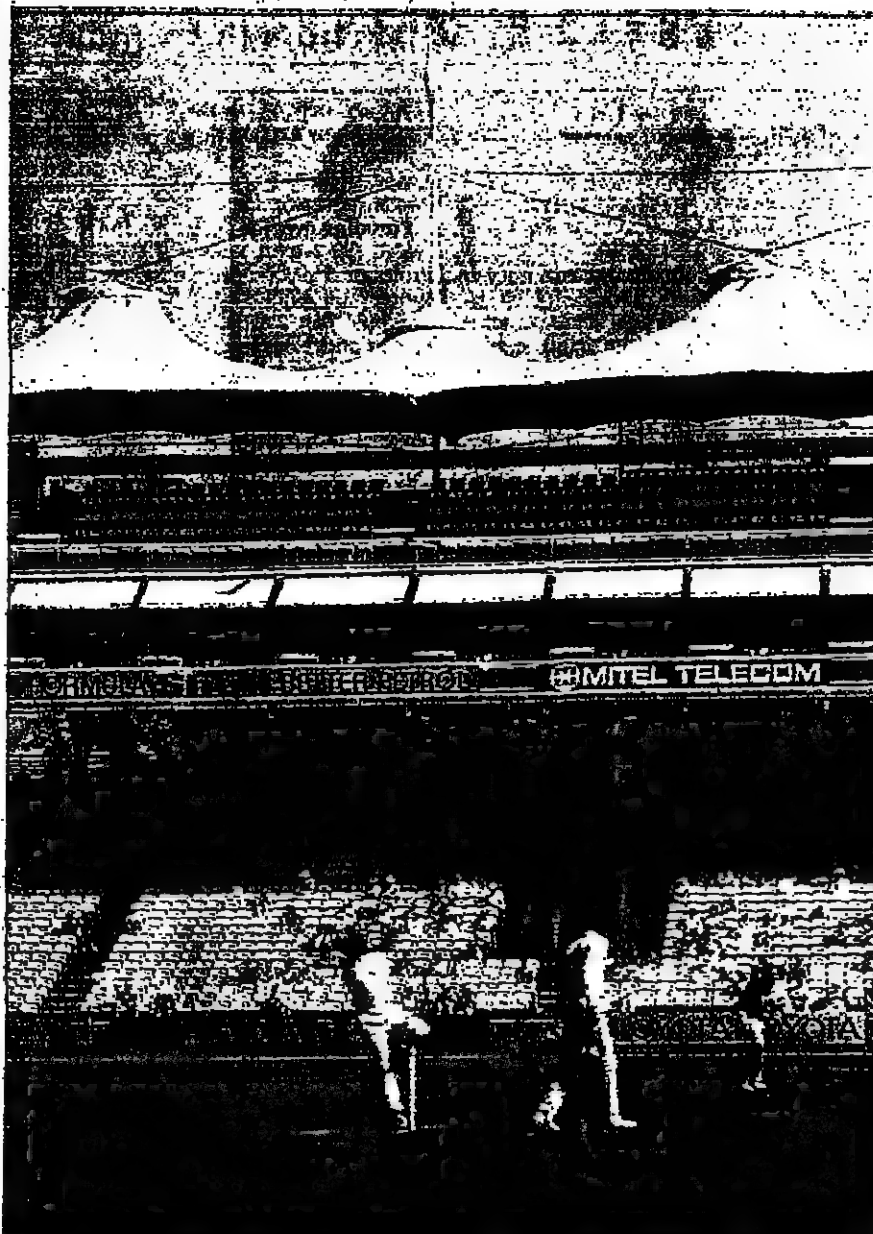
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When architects of the Mies generation built high-rise, Hopkins says, they had to enclose the steel frame in concrete. "Then Mies would stick a lighter steel frame outside to imply the method of construction. Today you can use the basic steel frame like a medieval timber frame, as the visible load-bearing structure, thanks to modern, fire-retarding paints."

What gives Hopkins's buildings their elegance is his superb sense of proportion. "This is what elevates them all about. But he does this by eye, 'standing back and looking; we don't use any magic formula'."

The tendency in recent years has been to lay out business parks in informal settings of grass and lakes. Hopkins rejects this. "They pretend you can't see one building from another, as if it was a series of large country houses in their own grounds. But it doesn't work. The density is too great."

He has chosen an urban model: Bedford Lakes is like Grosvenor Square when it was built in the 18th century: formally set in open fields."



In hallowed precincts: the Mound Stand at Lord's Cricket Ground (left), Bracken House by St Paul's Cathedral (top right) and Glyndebourne Opera (above)

The second element in Hopkins's architecture is a strong sense of movement. The skyline of the parliament building boasts an astonishing array of circular, oval, and polygonal chimneys which will appear in constantly changing combinations as you move along the river. The Tottenham Court Road design is punctuated at the corners by powerful cylindrical towers. At Bedford Lakes the neat grid of the facade is interrupted to reveal circular flying staircases within the whole height of the building.

The third element in Hopkins's architecture is an almost Escherichian severity. The atrium of Bracken House is like the original room of an ocean liner, all exposed structure and raw surface. He takes this a stage further at

the IBM building at Bedford and in the parliamentary offices. Both have vast, glazed-over central courtyards. "At our latitude you need to cover over such spaces if you are to make full use of them," he said.

Hopkins brings movement into the covered court at IBM by means of a huge construction across the centre, like the screen across a cathedral choir. The lifts project up into space, resembling a huge organ case, and the stairs are arranged in a single straight line, like the escalators on the outside of the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

Hopkins evolves his designs gradually. The early scenes for the parliamentary offices look slightly clumsy because of a massive, flat cornice girdling the building. But, by degrees, Hopkins has replaced it with an oversailing roof, allowing the towers to break through at the corners. These could be strengthened further to advantage.

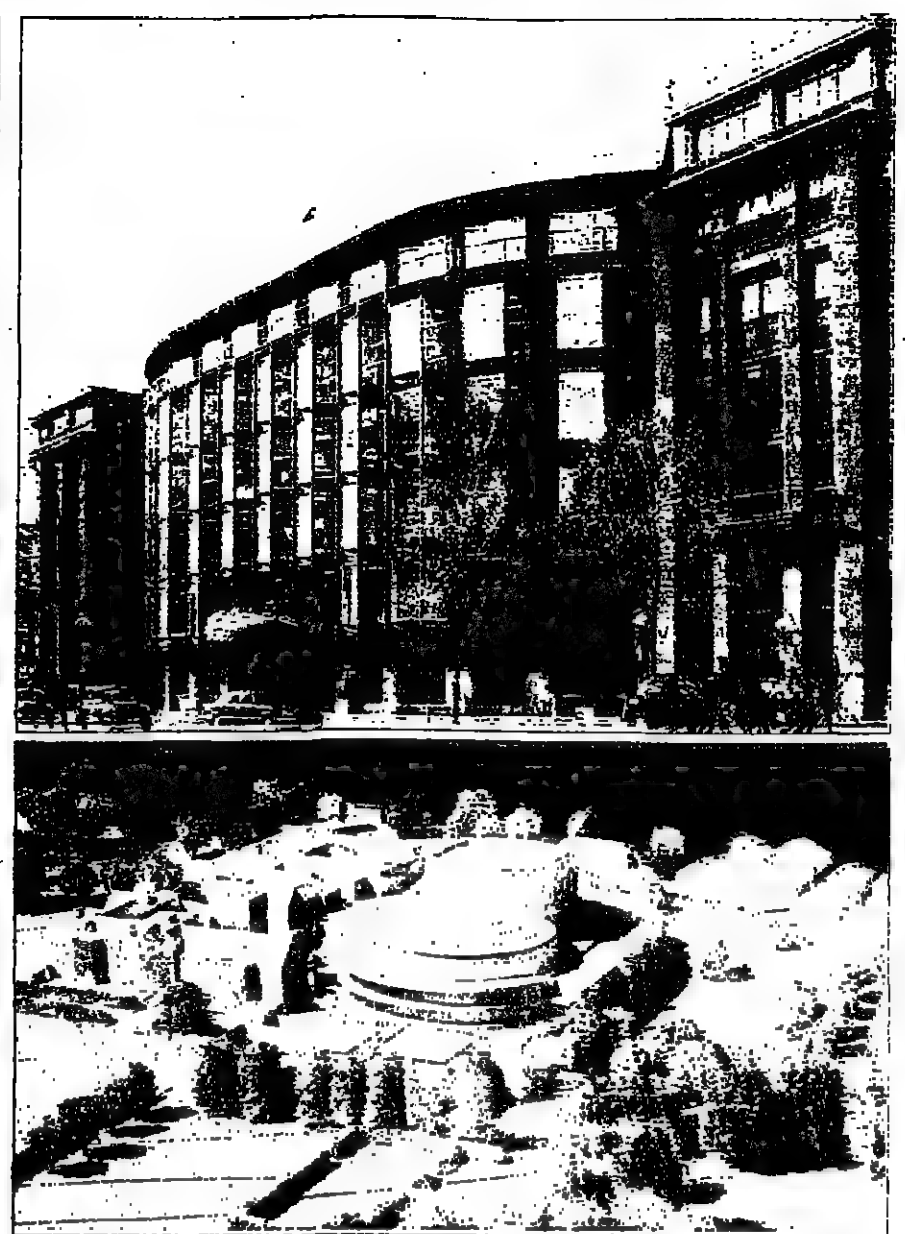
The 32 round towers at Nottingham will draw air through the building. "New technology allows us to bring in a lot of fresh air into the building without losing vast amounts of heat," says Hopkins. "You extract the warmth from the air and convert it into hot water to heat the building or energy to cool it. Until recently we were constantly recycling air within buildings. That's where the sick building syndrome came from."

At Glyndebourne the challenge was to find a way of blending the large elements of the fly-tower and auditorium into a sensitive setting. "I used the analogy of a big abbey church, with the domestic accommodation mediating between the church and the landscape. Around the fly-tower, we set a necklace of dressing rooms, offices and studios, which will help introduce a more friendly scale."

Hopkins's other great challenge has been replanning the Victoria and Albert Museum. "I wanted to make it easier for visitors to find their way round, for there to be a minimum of fuss between the building and the objects. Since the war so many museums have been filled up with plaster board to increase wall space, blanking out original features to create neutral

surfaces. I think museums are at their best when you can read the objects directly against the building." Conservation work, he believes, is stimulating because it adds a different dimension.

Hopkins's new ascendancy in a field so long dominated by the names of Foster, Rogers and Stirling is welcome — but it needs to be remembered that there are others equally worthy to wear the crown. Notable among these are Ted Cullinan, an architect who can put his soul into every commission, however small the building or the budget; and Terry Farrell, the man perfectly fitted to play the role of Matisse to Richard Rogers's Picasso. Such a diversity of British talent has not been seen since Edwardian days.



In hallowed precincts: the Mound Stand at Lord's Cricket Ground (left), Bracken House by St Paul's Cathedral (top right) and Glyndebourne Opera (above)

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ARTS BRIEF

For all seasons

BASINGSTOKE, the butt of many a joke, has announced ambitious plans to put itself on the artistic map with a new £12 million concert hall. Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council says the 1,400-seat hall, designed by Renon Howard Wood Levin Partnership, promises to become "a major focus of artistic, entertainment and business activity in the north of Hampshire and will break new ground in the combination of acoustic excellence and multi-use flexibility." The concert hall will accommodate full symphony orchestra and choir and will be able to adapt to many different uses, including cinema, conferences, snooker, boxing, banquets and disco. The council has already raised £10 million for the project and construction is expected to begin in June on a site in the city's centre. The hall is scheduled to open in early 1994.

Hall right now

PETER Hall's next production for the company that bears his name will be *Sienna Red*, written by the bard of concrete suburbia, Stephen Poliakoff, and set in a DIY shop. It was postponed last year because its principal actor, Martin Shaw, was unwell; but he is now recovered, and will open alongside Francesca Annis at the Liverpool Playhouse on April 15. Following its Liverpool run,



Francesca Annis: starring *Sienna Red* goes on tour, before ending up in London in June.

Only in his thirties?

THE octogenarian Japanese director Akira Kurosawa has been awarded the Directors Guild of America's D.W. Griffith Award for career achievement, but will be unable to attend the Guild's award ceremony later this month. Not because of ill-health; he will be busy preparing his 31st film, *Mada Da Yo* (Not Ready Yet). His last venture, *Rhapsody in August*, met with a mixed international reception.

Crocks

THE Royal Ballet is suffering more than its share of injuries among leading men. Robert Hill, who hurt his knee in Washington last summer, found that his brief return to the stage in *Les Sylphides* was premature and has since withdrawn again from all performances. Errol Pickford had an injury some months ago; there is no date yet for his return. Now Stuart Cassidy and Michael Nunn are also off with injury. New recruit Zoltan Solymosi, French guest Laurent Hilaire and young hopefuls Sergiu Pobereznic and William Trevitt all have extra performances as a result.

Richard's royal progress

LIKE the Olivier *Othello* in the days when the National Theatre was new, the Ian McKellen *Richard III* continues to pop back into the repertoire, this time for eight performances only (May 20-26). Alternatively, you could catch this production as it winds its way westward across the United States, from New York in June by way of Washington, St Paul, and Denver, to San Francisco and Los Angeles in September.

Last chance...

TOMORROW, the American historian Francis Fukuyama defends his contention that the democratic and free market values of the United States represent, as he calls it, "the end of history." A public debate chaired by Simon Jenkins, editor of *The Times*, will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1 at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £10 (£5 for students) and can be purchased at Dillons the Bookstore, 82 Gower Street, London WC1 (071-580 3243), or via facsimile on 071-580 7680.

TELEVISION REVIEW

Don't make Larry into an Aunt Sally

Not long before his death, I walked through Dublin with Ray McAnally, the most gifted Irish actor of his generation. Somehow the subject of Laurence Olivier came up. "A great actor?" he roared, turning surprised faces on both sides of the Liffey. "Olivier's not an actor at all. He's a performer."

That was pretty much the thesis of *Access to Channel 4's* *Wills* last night. Russell Davies, exuding mournful gravity, attacked Olivier for bravura fakery. "In catching the eye, he frequently disengaged the brain," he sighed. "A performance whose moment-to-moment brilliance dazzled an onlooker at the time often seemed less nourishing in retrospect."

The worry was and remains a valid one. For McAnally acting was a total surrender of the self to the role. So dedicated was he to thinking and feeling like the man he was playing, he would not even read those parts of the script in which he did not appear, on the grounds that knowledge the character could not possess might distort his interpretation. But Olivier was said to work "from the outside in": meaning that he tried first to get the appearance and body-language right and relied on a combination of craft and instinct to complete the character.

"A guarantee of superficiality," grumbled Davies the Dreyfusard. But is it? Acting is notoriously hard to define or explain, and the process of building a character impossible to reduce to an all-purpose system. Anyway, the result is what matters, not the method or Method of achieving it. Nobody could deny that McAnally's approach — an eclectic Stanislavskianism, if you want a definition — produced subtle and searching performances. But however they were created, Olivier's brooding Macbeth, his Shylock, his Astrov and his Solness were far from mere exercises in big-top bra-

vado. Davies anatomised none of them last night.

Myself, I began with some sympathy for his argument, only to be put off by the slant and selectivity. To show Olivier murderously leaping at Claudius from a balcony is not the fairest way of condemning his Hamlet for lack of depth. Nor does the sound of his Henry V exhorting his troops to do or die prove that he invariably uses Shakespeare's verse as "a vocal conveyance ferrying him to the ranting climaxes that really interest him". And wasn't his demonic grotesque truer to Richard III than the stealthy Sandhurst officer Ian McKellen recently presented at the National? Here at least Davies was quarrelling with Shakespeare and blaming Olivier.

So may he have been with another famous performance. I have always half-agreed with Alan Brien's view of Olivier's *Othello* as "a kind of bad acting of which only a great actor is capable"; but when Davies introduced a class of knowing tots from Westminster School, and showed them snickering at a video of the performance, I found myself somersaulting the other way. Isn't there a perfectly respectable school of criticism which holds that *Othello* the character is a narcissist and a poseur? Above all, how can Olivier be judged from a television monitor or, for that matter, the cinema screen?

He was as much a stage actor as Garrick and Kean before him. Were Westminster School to watch them on video, the laughter would doubtless blow off the roof; yet women fainted when Garrick's Hamlet saw his father's ghost and so G.H. Lewes tells us, old men wept at the memory of Kean's desperate *Othello*. Those who experienced Olivier in the place that counted, the theatre, will not forget his power to seize, hold and churn the mind and the heart. Call it acting, call it performing: it was magic.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

THEATRE

Obligation to the future

Andrew Hay is defying current economic wisdom with his Bristol Old Vic repertory ensemble. He tells Joseph Williams why

JULIAN HARRIS



Artistic director Andrew Hay outside Bristol Old Vic

Fuente Ovejuna, Lope de Vega's classical work about a Spanish town gripped by a tyrant: a passionate play with music and song.

"In ensemble, you can learn your craft and technique, and you watch and work with others very closely," says Hay, who himself acted in old-style rep at Oldham, and found that audiences loved seeing actors play against type, and even chatted to them later in pubs.

This is vital, he believes, in binding communities and empowering actors with a voice. "It even affects playwrights. In the early Eighties our major writers said they wrote for the National The-

atre and the RSC because nobody else had such large companies."

The devastation of old-style rep is regrettable: Liverpool's Playhouse, whose alumni include Michael Redgrave, may never return to traditional rep, despite being saved from bankruptcy by the impresario Bill Kenwright, who will offer any box-office losses.

Leatherhead, Basingstoke and Farnham reps produce many commercial productions geared to West End transfers. An attempt to form a core company of classical fare at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre last year collapsed, its fire snatched by the suc-

cessful commercialism of its sister Lyceum Theatre. Ironically, overall standards at repertory remain high: does it then matter if ensembles crumble? "You can create a style in ensemble," says Roger Redgrave, artistic director of Plymouth's Theatre Royal, which cannot form a home-based ensemble as each production must, contractually, have an after-life, touring or transferring to London.

"It's more exciting with a permanent company, because you take many more risks in your casting, and audiences understand it. I think there's a generation that has lost the habit of going to see plays — the diet is much more towards musicals. With the death of so many reps, the three-weekly play cycle's gone, and a lot of young people just don't see plays any more."

The Nottingham Playhouse once had a vigorous ensemble, which launched stars such as Jonathan Pryce. Last year, it experimented with a 14-strong company in a five-month season — only possible through a £50,000 brewery sponsorship.

Ruth Mackenzie, executive director of the Playhouse, believes audiences yearn for ensemble excitement: "In a play like *The Cherry Orchard* you can get deeper, quicker, because the actors already know each other. People here reminisce how there'd be this bright young thing in his first job, in *Coriolanus*, called Ian McKellen. They'd see him learning and growing." That was 1964.

Only pockets of the old ensemble repertoires now survive in the regions, as in Stoke-on-Trent's New Victoria Theatre and Liverpool's Everyman, which has 12 members performing a large classical repertoire over ten months. Birmingham Repertory is seriously considering forming an ensemble this autumn.

Yet the RSC and the National Theatre both have long-established ensembles with varied repertoires. Do our regions deserve anything less?

● *Fuente Ovejuna* opens tonight at Bristol Old Vic (0272 250250), until March 28.

Men's hour and mean woman blues

We're your mother, we're your sister, we're your lover," a Reggae jingle pumps out from speakers rigged up on the mixing desk. The producer reads the broadcast test and coaches Scotty, the engineer, through the soundcheck. "Fem FM. The female frequency," the presenter announces in a breezy voice. The studio looks improvised, with a lot of sticky tape, a swathe of blue velvet and a couple of screens, but it sounds like the real thing.

Fem FM is Britain's first all-female radio station, which will broadcast to the Bristol area from Sunday, International Women's Day. Nineteen hours of music and talk will be pumped out of this four-storey house in Bristol's Brunswick Square every day for a week, and not a screwdriver-wielding man in sight. The station was originally planned to run for two weeks, in conjunction with the Bristol Women's Festival for the night, but only enough funds were raised to pay for eight days on air.

The station is the brainchild of Caroline Mitchell, a lecturer in radio and media studies, and

Trish Caverley, a radio producer, both in their thirties. They conceived the idea a year ago when FTP, the local station where they both worked closed down.

The aim is to give women experience in radio. "People always say how many women newsreaders there are," says Ms Mitchell. "But women are under-represented in technical jobs, management and music presentation. That's a significant proportion of the work."

With less than a week to go before the first transmission, the excitement is palpable. There is much hugging and massaging of shoulders. More than 200 volunteers who staff the station were recruited through public meetings in the city. About 40 more will be taking part in broadcasts, from schoolgirls to Jenny Mills and Paul Caldwell, BBC Radio 4 presenters, and local DJs.

Some of the women will be wearing the headphones for the first time — men, it seems, do not like to see a woman behind a desk. "Women have to be extremely confident before they are allowed to play with the toys," Ms

Fem FM, Britain's first all-female radio station, with a chat show for chaps, broadcasts for seven days from this Sunday

Caverley says. Since Fem was launched, a number of professional women broadcasters have given up weeks and weekends to share their skills.

Tania Raymond, aged 24, has worked in commercial radio for three years, but Fem will be her first experience in production. Born in Sri Lanka, she has not yet worked on a mainstream programme that is neither about women or ethnic minorities. Miranda Congdon joined FTP as a trainee presenter, and ended up in promotions. On Fem she will present her own country and western music show, *It's not Hank, it's Miranda*. There has already been some



Turning tables: Jenny B. Goode will present her own show

response to Fem in the industry. The local independent station, Great Western Radio, has moved its only female presenter into a daytime slot, which commands a far larger audience than her previous berth. GWR also launched a competition to find the best New Female DJ — won by Miranda "not Hank" Congdon.

The name, Fem FM, itself sounds like a challenge — one is reminded of those scary Rad Fems of the early 1980s with cropped hair, workmen's overalls and kick-your-head-in boots. But nobody likes to mention the F-word. "It could be feminist or female or feminine," Ms Mitchell says, hopefully.

In one room the token men are rehearsing a feature for Men's Hour. They are not feminists. "It doesn't mean I don't sympathise with their ideas," Toby Murcott explains. "I wouldn't say I was a black civil rights activist either."

They find the station a positive and productive place to work, and their programme tackles topics

not usually open to men on radio. "When the subject is normal life, divorce and families, it's women who talk about it. We've been given the opportunity to prove there's more to men than sport and news."

The programming contains a mix of women's issues and interests in talk shows and features; not much mention of news and current affairs, and total silence on the subject of sport. The main ingredient is "music from a woman's point of view". I confess some confusion. Would that be "Stand By Your Man" or "Respect"?

"People like to hear music chosen by a woman," claims Bristol DJ Queen Bee, who used to have to fight male DJs, literally, to get her turn on the tables. "We've got a lot of specialist music programmes."

The station isn't bound by the normal restrictions on commercial radio. There's no playlist, so we've got everything from rock 'n' roll to cajan to house.

The station will cost £20,000. Ms Mitchell and Ms Caverley raised the money from sponsors,

including Aer Lingus and the Co-Op bank.

Some of the businessmen we approached were a bit alarmed at the idea," Ms Mitchell says, "but others loved it straight away." Early publicity generated an enthusiastic response and dozens of people sent donations. The staff has worked unpaid, some for as long as a year. Jenny B. Goode, who will be presenting her own rock 'n' roll show, *Mean Woman Blues*, has worked for 12 years in a bank, but since she joined Fem, she has turned tables in a number of Bristol clubs. "I'm not a feminist," she says. "I'm playing sounds by women." She has found the first recording of "Hound Dog" — not by Elvis Presley, by Big Mama Thornton, in 1953.

"Not all women singers have a walk-all-over-me image. Memphis Minnie sang a song called 'Me and My Chauffeur', about a woman whose driver has affairs with all these women in the back of her car. In the end she shoots him and drives herself around."

All right!

CLARE LONGRIGG

Transformed by a late love

Anna Massey, who opened last night in *Hard Heart* by Howard Barker, tells Valerie Grove how her own heart was won after years of solitude

We must stop thinking of Anna Massey as the thin, cardigan-wearing spinster she played, painfully and exquisitely, in *Hotel du Lac*. Though as thin as ever, on a rigid diet and looking much as she did when playing Anita Brookner's Edith Hope, she has been a transformed woman for three and a half years now. She never tires of describing how the *coup de foudre* came, and the "upward surge of niceness" that life has had since. Uri Anders, a Russian metallurgist and lover, was the catalyst of Miss Massey's late bliss. From being famously solitary, she is now, at 54, famously happily married.

"It's endlessly interesting being in love, isn't it? But I know that I am, and never was before. Some people take a long time to come to terms with who and what they are, and until you do, you can't give yourself to anyone because what are you giving? A bundle of neurotic selfishness."

"I'd given up really, I'd decided that you might as well live for today, experience the moment, not look forward or dread the tomorrow... and it just happened." They sat next to each other at a dinner party; he arrived slightly late, on foot. They were instantly in conversation about the cosmos and big bang. "You know how with some people you get into deep subjects very quickly." After that one dinner, on August 10, 1988, he went off to Russia for three weeks but when he returned they were married within ten weeks.

"I think I knew after about ten minutes. He's a completely original man. He stimulates one to think. He's very amusing, and so modest he couldn't even spell 'boast'. And we can live together incredibly compatibly."

Every day he walks from their house in Shepherd's Bush to Imperial College. Recently his daughter and granddaughter from Moscow came to stay. "Here we are, saying you must eat brown bread and they're lucky to get a bloody loaf. And yes, when we went to Moscow I was bowled over by the generosity of spirit. The generosity people show when they have not very much to give, it puts that Lloyd's situation into perspective doesn't it?"

Last night she opened at the Almeida in Howard Barker's new play, *A Hard Heart*. It is set in a city under siege, run by a queen; she plays Riddler, architect and woman of genius. She says astutely that the play is "a tremendous challenge", enough to

lure her to Islington for £165 a week. "Howard Barker's writing is incredibly rich and precise, like dancing on a tightrope." But she expects no West End transfer. Who can ever tell? "Last year I did a play at Greenwich that was really commercial, Neil Simon's *Broadway Bound*, and got really commercial reviews, and even that didn't transfer."

When in Dr Anthony Clare's chair, she said how she loved doing radio drama: she could get away with playing a great beauty, on radio. But what she has is more admirable than mere beauty: a great intelligence, and an instantly recognisable voice, with its precise diction and clearly enunciated consonants. The other day she was heard again reading favourite poems and Shakespeare extracts with the late Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, who doted on "darling little Anna".

Her childhood, though affluent, was somewhat uncherished. Her parents separated when she was one, so she did not get to know her father, Raymond Massey, who departed for Hollywood, still much later. Her mother, the actress Adrienne Allen, married her former husband's new wife's former husband, as complicated an arrangement as could be imagined. The nanny who looked after Anna and Daniel, her brother, seemed more like her mother; she later became nanny to the son Anna had while briefly married to Jeremy Brett, ne Higgin. "Darling nanny, I said to her, we must put up your wages — £5 a week — and she said, what would I spend it on?"

In her teens, Miss Massey had lived like a princess on a high hill, in The Grove, Highgate, north London, a house her mother sold to Yehudi Menuhin, and which he sold to Sting. "It was a beautiful house, but so remote, nobody would ever take you home — six quid for a taxi." She was one of the last debutantes to be presented at court in 1955, and proceeded to make her West End reputation in *The Reluctant Debutante*. "When I married, in 1958, I was a child. People married more quickly then. It took me 30 years to make the right decision."

Though never short of friends, and regularly giving memorable performances — Miss Jean Brodie, Gwen John, the menacing Mrs Danvers in the televised *Rebecca* (Daphne du Maurier thought her perfect) she was privately lonely, much of the time.



"You must pursue what you want to pursue and never make compromises, ever ever ever," Anna Massey says of the themes of Willa Cather, her favourite author

"I would have been a pretty perplexed mortal without my 12 years of analysis. I'm not one of those who think everybody should have it, but when people do need it, it can be a lifeline. They helped me sort out a lot of driftwood, that was clogging up. The day you say goodbye to your analyst is the first day you start helping yourself. But you do go on discovering, and it is painful as well. I think life is a continual journey of gaining knowledge in a thousand different ways. If you're a bed of selfish

neuroses, as I was, you're not able to see that. "Of course I wouldn't need outside help now, if I wanted to talk to anyone I'd talk to Uri. You have to be very brave to live on your own. But I do think this. Big cliché coming. Only when you are able to live on your own, do you have the self-sufficiency and inner strength to be a good partner; the qualities that stop you from becoming over-reliant."

Her old lack of confidence persists in asides such as "I'm

frightfully boring myself". But she is an excellent company. "What's going to happen in this election? I think it's getting harder and harder for politicians to deceive people." She has never voted anything but Labour. Books are her passion, read even on her exercise bike, and discussed at breakfast speed. "What do you make of Rosamond Lehmann's thing about the after life? She rather lost me on getting through to the other side. Of course Uri is sceptical: six feet under and that's

it. We're very lucky to get through, as Noel Coward said, lunch." Willa Cather is her absolute favourite author. "Have you read *The Song of the Lark*? Buy it tonight. Cather's great theme is the artist and compromise. You must pursue what you want to pursue and never make compromises, ever ever ever. I agree, don't you?" Cather comes out of copy-right in 1997, "by which time I shall be too old to play any of her heroines. Perhaps I could play one on radio. If someone asks me."

Guide to surgery
THE COY term "women's problems" covers a multitude of ills, many of which require operations. *The Woman's Guide to Surgery*, to be published next week, by Thorsons (£9.99, paperback), attempts to demystify D&Cs, cone biopsies, laparoscopies and other feminine issues by offering advice on preparing for hospitalisation, facts about types of surgery and exercises for getting in shape — mentally and physically — after specific operations.

Written by Tim Collart, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist and medical writer Felicity Smart, it is in a question and answer format.

Good as can be
THERE is still time to tempt the obnoxious into participating in "National No-Menacing Week" — conceived to swell the coffers of "Tommy's Campaign" (to look into premature birth) for St Thomas's Hospital. Paul Gascoigne and Nigel Havers have already agreed to attempt to be "good as gold" for the week from March 29 to April 4. For a "No-Menacing" pack, send a stamped, self-addressed foolscap envelope to: Tommy, London SE99 6RD or call 071-620 2654.

VICTORIA MCKEE

On Sunday, International Women's Day, a feminist Muslim movement celebrates its third anniversary

Rebels against the cause

While Islamic religious leaders still embrace Ayatollah Khomeini's *fatwa* calling for Salman Rushdie's death, some of their wives and sisters are rebelling. On Sunday, International Women's Day will also mark the third anniversary of an organised feminist Muslim movement against religious fundamentalism which began when 200 women joined the Southall Black Sisters (SBS) to challenge their communities and support Mr Rushdie.

SBS, a grant-aided London advice centre originally for Asian and Afro-Caribbean women, founded a campaigning group called Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) and to cries of "whores" and "home-wreckers" from Muslim men, the women marched for Mr Rushdie.

Gita Saghal, a founding member of WAF, says that when Mr Rushdie said "I refuse to become an unperson... to live in a box", he voiced the determination ex-



Her own women: WAF member Hannana Siddiqui, who will make her own plans

pressed in the WAF slogan: Struggle not Suppression. WAF now includes Catholic, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu, as well as Muslim members and has bases in Bradford,

Manchester and Leeds as well as its original office in north London; with links in Ireland, France, Germany, Lebanon, Pakistan, India and Iran.

WAF believes, according to the manifesto set out in its newsletter, that "at the heart of all fundamentalist agendas is the control of women's minds and bodies... with

the patriarchal family as a central agent of that control". Asian and Muslim women from WAF recently picketed the Irish Embassy to protest against the abortion ban in Ireland. Meena Patel, a member of WAF says: "Problems concerning Irish women living under Catholicism show women of Asian, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities how fundamentalism works right here in Britain."

Muslim members of WAF refuse to be represented by community leaders in Britain, such as Kalim Siddiqui of the Muslim parliament, who claim to voice the consensus of opinion. "It's been assumed that the views of vocal community leaders are our [women's] views and their demands are our demands. We reject this absolutely," says Hannana Siddiqui, a WAF member. "I

want to create my own future. We must all struggle against the body of religious belief which denies us our right to determine our sexuality and justifies violence against women."

One of WAF's campaigns is against the Muslim parliament's demands for state-funded religious schools. "Girls in religious schools only learn how to read the Koran and wear the hijab [headscarf]," Ms Siddiqui says. Sarah Shareef, of the Islamic Schools Trust, which was set up to fund religious schools, says: "The hijab is part of school uniform. We give girls a moral upbringing and teach them to be good Muslims and offer a full curriculum."

WAF is also campaigning for the removal of state funds from other religious schools.

Julia Bard, a WAF member, says, for example, that Jewish schools "teach girls how to keep a kosher kitchen, to be fruitful and multiply, especially if the rabbi is Lubavitch [fundamentalist]". Rabbi M. Roberg, of the Jewish Secondary schools movement, does not dispute that girls are educated in a different way from boys.

"The duties and role of a woman are different from those of men," he says. "She will be a wife and mother."

Nadi Khan, the director of the Muslim women's welfare project, thinks WAF is wrong to suggest there is a form of gender-racism in fundamentalist religions. "I am happy with my religion. Islamic women do not have to worry about going out to work and earning money," she says. "A woman is protected and respected under Islam. Women are wrong if they turn against religion because of personal problems."

JOCASTA SHAKESPEARE
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Unhappy returns

Concubines, communists and culture

Kate Muir meets Jung Chang, the writer and teacher, whose book, *Wild Swans*, tells the true story of three generations of women who moved from palaces to prison cells in the Chinese cultural revolution



Blood ties: Ms Chang with her mother, Xia De-hong, in 1988

Imagine this, a grandmother sold as a concubine to a Chinese warlord, her tiny feet bound to suit the erotic tastes of her master. Pass on to her daughter, a Communist party member, tortured under Chairman Mao, and end with her granddaughter, a former Red Guard attending Ealing College of Higher Education.

If this were fiction Jung Chang, the author and granddaughter, might be accused of laying it on a bit thick. But it is fact, and what is more, fact spanning a mere half century, from medieval-style concubinage in 1924, to arrival in London in 1978. The words "epic family saga" have been taken in vain too often by the purveyors of cheap novels, but they precisely describe *Wild Swans*.

The history of 20th century China, rather than being the colourful background traditional in this sort of book, is more like a purge which rips through the three women. From the violence, blood and humiliation which were the constant companions of Ms Chang's youth, she ought to be calloused by experience and still shaped like a Mao suit. Yet she is soft-spoken and elegant. She indulges herself by both laughing and wearing a pair of high silver mules about her Nottingham Hill, west London flat.

At 39, she does not seem to be carrying the heavy burden her writing implies. She says her experiences have not changed her basic character. "When a huge tide comes like the cultural revolution did in China, there are some people who are swept under, some who are carried away, and some who rise above the tide and somehow manage to create some kind of independent world around them which is bearable."

Ms Chang noticed in writing that she, her mother and grandmother always made things livable even in the worst circumstances. When her mother and father were both sent to work camps in the countryside, her father grew gaunt and depressed, while her mother looked like a healthy peasant. "Even when she was in prison, she mostly managed to get nice guards who helped her. Same with my grandmother, who was helped to escape her master's house by another friendly concubine. We have this tendency to survive."

'I got closer to my mother, and to my father, and grandmother through the book'

when she watched her Red Guard classmates beat their "bourgeois" teachers with the metal buckles of their belts.

When Ms Chang arrived in London to learn English aged 26, as one of the first students allowed to leave China, she would wake up every night with dreams of "blood and death, nothing specific". For the next ten years, she tried to block out memories of home because they were too painful. Then her mother, now widowed, came to stay for six months.

By this time, Ms Chang had completed a PhD in linguistics, and was teaching at London University. "I had tried writing before, but I had a blockage which hid details of the past. But one day my mother just started talking about my father. Before I had assumed my parents were blissfully happily married, but she had bottled up all these things. He had let her walk a thousand miles to reach him, yet he ignored her when she was about to have a miscarriage."

Ms Chang was amazed, and asked her for more details. "Once

started, my mother couldn't stop. She went on and on with more and more stories." All the words which had to remain unspoken, even unthought, in China exploded out in the safety of London. Her mother was not even interested in sighs. They went on holiday to Switzerland and Scotland and she talked in the car. By the end, they had 60 hours of tape-recorded history.

Ironically, the detail which makes the book so convincing without the dozens of interrogations of Ms Chang's mother as a counter-revolutionary suspect. "Sometimes there were up to 15 people investigating her, and she was forced to remember exact words and deeds from 20 years before, again and again. She found out what had happened to many of her relatives and friends who were also brought in." Even the family photographs in the book were preserved by a fluke when the Red Guards raided Ms Chang's father's possessions. They were kept intact and returned years later.

The writing was as cathartic for Ms Chang as the talking was for her mother. "I got closer to her, and to my father and grandmother through it. I stopped having nightmares, and I started understanding more of what had gone on." She wrote to her mother twice a week, and even faxed her at the local post office in China. "The book has done something quite tremendous for her. She is now a very tranquil person and at peace with herself. When I read her readers' letters after it was published in America, she was pleased to find herself understood by so many people."

For the Chinese, *Wild Swans* is a chunk of their missing history, saved from the book-burnings and propaganda of the time when Mao Zedong said he wanted his people to be a blank sheet of paper on which he could write anything he pleased. Ms Chang is presently engaged in the Chinese version. Having written the book in her second language (with the help of her English husband), she finds words such as self-pity, inferiority complex and other psychological terms, have no Chinese equivalent.

She hopes that the book will explain the Chinese to the West, which she criticises for seeing the nation as an amorphous blob —



Rising above the tide: the words 'epic family saga' have been used too often, but they precisely describe Jung Chang's *Wild Swans*

the masses, rather than individuals. After all, the West was equally strange to her when she arrived at Heathrow airport and walked into the men's lavatory, safe in the knowledge that the little sign showed a woman wearing trousers, since skirts were banned at that time in her homeland.

Although she felt as if she had arrived "on another planet" — I had no idea who Mick Jagger or Marilyn Monroe were", she relished the escape from official vigilance. "I was left alone. I could put my feet up and let my hair down and relax."

When she left China, it was still hungover from Mao, and violence and cruelty had only recently been demoted as virtues. "I think it is very difficult for British people to

understand. Mentally perhaps, but not physically, not that feeling in your stomach when someone rules by terrorising. It was so unpredictable."

Present day China has lost that now, she has noticed in her yearly visits home. If people keep their heads down, and do not go out and form an opposition party, they are fairly safe. In some ways the Tiananmen Square massacre, which the West saw as a step backwards, Ms Chang saw as a beginning. She was there just beforehand and was very touched when she saw the students beginning to demonstrate. "People just didn't seem to have that kind of fear any more. When I was there, you couldn't

even contemplate the thought of a demonstration in case you talked in your sleep. Even afterwards, most people refused to denounce each other. Fear made a tentative comeback, but it just didn't have the force of Maoist days."

Ms Chang believes China's growing capitalist economy will pull it towards democracy soon. Each visit gives her more hope. In 1985, she returned to a tea-house on the Silk River, which she had watched the schoolchildren of the Red Guards trash and shut down years before.

Of that first visit, she wrote: "The summer evening breezes from the river fanned out a heavy scent from the clusters of white blossoms. The customers, mostly men, raised their heads from their

chessboards as we approached along the uneven cobblestones that paved the bank. We stopped under the tree. A few voices from the group started to shout: 'Pack up! Pack up! Don't linger in this bourgeois place! A boy snatched a corner of the paper chessboard on the nearest table and jerked it away. The wooden pieces scattered on the ground.'"

The simple pleasure of taking tea was denied to the people of Sichuan for 15 years. When Ms Chang returned to the re-opened tea-house with a British friend, an old waitress came to fill their cups from a long-spouted kettle. "We were sat under the same tree, and I felt tears rolling down my cheeks." *Wild Swans* is published by HarperCollins at £17.50

Courses for women who wish to resume their careers after having children may boost confidence, but do they bring jobs?

Unhappy returns

All dressed up and nowhere to go. Could this be an appropriate epitaph for women returners? Diana Wolfin, a recent graduate of a 15-week Professional Updating for Women course, hopes not. However, experience suggests it describes their situation to a T.

Mrs Wolfin and 23 other women claim to be the first graduates of the course since Opportunity 2000 was launched. The course was paid for by the European Social Fund, set up to help the long-term unemployed. With their stiff, buff-coloured certificates to prove their workworthiness, they are now able to take advantage of opportunities.

But since they graduated at Christmas, they say they are finding more against them than a recession: ageism, sexism, absenteeism (the graduates of this course had spent between two and 20 years out of the workplace) and accusations of being "over-qualified". They are probably also the last generation of women returners:

most parents today will look at the difficulties mothers of a certain age are facing and discourage their daughters from giving up a career when they have a baby.

Jill Jones, the leader of the course at the Polytechnic of Central London, is trying to keep up the group's spirit and momentum. Last week she held a reunion at the college so they could pool experiences.

"I don't think these women have very high expectations of salary, they realise they are likely to be penalised for the break they have taken," she says. Apart from two graduates who have received marketing assignments from the TSB, which could lead to jobs, "We have sent their CVs to all the Opportunity 2000 organisations but have had no replies yet, except to say they have been passed on to the personnel departments."

The group has also drafted a letter to the prime minister, which it will deliver when the election is called. It asks: "What is happening? Is Opportunity 2000 no more than an expression of intent?"



Career moves: some of the hopeful Central London Polytechnic course graduates

Mrs Wolfin is disappointed but not depressed — yet — by the lack of success she and her fellow students have had. A typical returner, she graduated from London University with two degrees, French and German, married at 21, and has spent the last 20 years bringing up four children now aged between 19 and 12.

In her day, she says, women did not think of trying to combine motherhood with a career. "I have two daughters and I will certainly advise them to keep their hands in, but they will probably make

up their own minds: they can see what is happening to me. "I have sent off eight or nine job applications and was shortlisted once, but there is such a shortage of jobs employers can be very particular. If they want someone with green hair and three legs they will find them now. I was told by one employer she was reluctant to give me a job because I am too well qualified. Employers feel they can't match my financial expectations. What I would like ideally is to job-share."

In spite of their achievements (to get on the course, they had to have a degree and professional work experience) the women felt the course would give them the confidence to apply for the jobs they are now going for. They don't undervalue the work they have been doing bringing up children, but employers seem either not to recognise it or to be frightened of the "superwoman syndrome". Carol Ilnatowicz, married with three children aged 11, nine and five, has a degree in economics from Bristol. She

was a deputy chief officer with a local authority when she "retired" 11 years ago and at an interview for a job as a principal personnel officer recently she was told she was "too powerful". "They thought I took over the interview. I thought I was having a nice dialogue," she says. "The trouble is I am applying for jobs way below my capabilities. I have learnt from this experience and will have to play interviewers' games, be more circumspect."

Although the returners industry is bursting with eager recruits, it seems that recruitment practice, especially among smaller organisations, is not reflecting equal opportunities legislation.

Ms Jones was surprised to be told by a pupil that in 1992 a woman can be asked: "What does your husband do?" She says: "They are finding it hard because they are an extraordinarily competent group and it is alarming to hear there is still discrimination, especially in terms of age, against women."

Lesley Champkin has two children, one a 14-year-old daughter who, she says, will "definitely not" give up work to bring up a family. Mrs Champkin, who has a degree in furniture and interior design, has written 300 letters in her search for a job, so far unsuccessfully. During a two-week part-time work assign-

ment, a male colleague expressed surprise she was still working "at your age". She is 44.

"You have to be careful not to become cynical, especially when things get tough," she says. "You can feel sorry for yourself. My daughter helps me to write envelopes, so she sees what is going on and can draw her own conclusions. I was a lecturer, but was pushed out when I had children and never managed to get back into full-time work."

As pioneers trying to prove that women who have been full-time mothers still have brains, they acknowledge there is a long way to go. Mrs Ilnatowicz says: "Last week I was at a seminar run by Marks & Spencer's, and a manager said to a woman who had been on maternity leave and had done a course as well, 'I am glad you have not wasted your year off.'"

HEATHER KIRBY
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TV talent left in the wings

Melinda Wittstock
sees a generation of
television skills
going to waste as
jobs and budgets
are slashed

ROBIN Britton could be one of the lucky ones. Mr Britton is the 30-year-old news editor of TVS's *Coast To Coast*, which was voted best regional news programme at last week's Royal Television Society journalism awards. He is more confident than most other out-of-work young television journalists, producers, researchers and technicians that he will find a new job in television when TVS goes off the air in 10 months.

Although he has not found a new job yet, he hopes that Meridian, which displaced TVS in last October's ITV auction, will hire him. "It's been an emotional roller-coaster for all of us," says Mr Britton. "It's always been a competitive industry, but there is so much more uncertainty now. Staff jobs are simply a thing of the past."

Prospects for young talent in television have never been shakier. Broadcasters are firing rather than hiring, sending thousands of television employees into an uncertain independent production sector, where as freelancers they are the victims of ever-shrinking programme budgets. Most young programme makers find it impossible to secure steady employment.

The statistics are bleak. An annual pay and personnel survey by *Broadcast* magazine in January indicated that the ITV workforce had declined from a peak of 16,800 in 1987 to 15,900 before the franchise results and had since plummeted to between 12,000 and 12,500. If the ITV contractors fulfil the forecasts in their licence applications, the total will drop to only 9,500 next year.

Meanwhile, Bectu, the broadcasting union, forecasts that by April 1993 as many as 8,000 jobs will have been lost at the BBC since 1987.

Ursula Macfarlane, aged 30, an assistant producer whose credits include the Channel 4 arts programme *Signposts* and Central's *Japan Dreams*, has not worked since December. "A lot of talent is



Ursula Macfarlane: "We don't have much experience of anything but proposals. We'll be a generation of 'paper' producers."

going to waste," she said. "We are supposed to be the future of the industry, yet we are not being properly trained. Young talent is being picked but not nurtured."

"There are quite a few of us capable of producing good programmes, but we don't have a lot of experience doing anything but writing up proposals. We will be a whole generation of 'paper' producers. Work comes only in dribs and drabs."

Ms Macfarlane, who turned down a prestigious directorship at the Lynne Franks public relations firm three years ago to try her luck in television, now works each day doing PR for a charity and then works late every night at home on proposals for television programmes she would like to produce and direct.

"I'm exhausted. I always knew it would be erratic. If you are freelance, you have to know how best to use your time when you're not working, although it is hard for many not to sit around feeling anxious and depressed. I know a lot of talented people who have not worked for a year."

"Sometimes I think maybe I should retrain, but I love television. It's the only thing I really want to do," she says.

Sally Peters, aged 24, a video-



Robin Britton, news editor. On emotional rollercoaster

operator, left work at TVS on Friday along with 119 others who were given redundancy notices before Christmas. She has not found another job and has a £50,000 mortgage. "I'm gutted by the whole thing," she says. "I know my work is good, so this is soul-destroying."

Ms Peters, who now plans a new career selling broadcasting equipment, says redundancies and budget cuts throughout the industry will result in a decline in programme quality. "Fewer staff are doing more, so technically things



Sally Peters, video operator. Made redundant by TVS

are not nearly so good. Those that remain are being worked so hard under so much pressure, they will be burnt out in a few years. A whole generation of talent could be lost, and viewers will be the ones that suffer."

Marguerita, unwilling to use her full name for fear of being labelled a "troublemaker" within the industry, is a documentary researcher and aspiring director. Now aged 31, she worked only four months last year, earning just £4,800 for five documentaries which will be shown on the BBC

and Channel 4 this year.

Overdrawn at the bank by £5,000, she regularly works without pay to gain directing and producing experience. She spent more than £1,000 on telephone calls researching 40 different programme proposals now working their way through the system. The bill to get them printed and mailed to commissioning editors was £1,200. Her parents are beginning to press her to switch careers.

First Film Foundation, a charity set up three years ago to create opportunities for young people in film and television, says that only a tiny fraction of the talent it sees each year finds regular work. The foundation looks at 2,500 programme proposals a year and has so far helped develop 60. It has had six commissioned, including Channel 4's *Deftford Graffiti* and *From Russia With Laughter*. Debra Burton, its director, says: "There's an awful lot of really good people, really talented people, hanging around the system for a long time. There just haven't been the outlets."

"It is so much harder for young people these days. I think that in 15 years the industry will ask itself how we let quality programming go down the toilet as we did."

Changing the mouthpiece

Who would Labour choose to be government chief press secretary?

For journalists, this is the waiting season. They are waiting not just for the off — the general election — or for unsaddling and, if possible, rapidly unsettling the winner. They are also waiting, perhaps more anxiously than they admit, to learn who they will have to work with in 10 Downing Street for the next four or five years, assuming a decisive result.

As the sap rises so does the speculation about who will be the next chief press secretary — a job I occupied for 11 years, one month and five days, to the acute distress of some journalists, politicians, civil servants and even members of the public, who seemed to believe all they read about me in newspapers. For them, nothing became me, more than my going.

Of course, the power of the chief press secretary can be overrated. He has very little power in our highly devolved system of cabinet govern-

ment except that of persuasion. I did not call departmental heads of information — the press secretaries to cabinet ministers — robber barons for nothing. They reflect the substantial autonomy of their ministerial bosses to whom they give their first loyalty. They cannot be ordered to do things; they have to be persuaded.

Yet if a chief press secretary is to do his job by the government as well as his prime minister, he must work closely with departments. His role, among other things, is to co-ordinate the government's overall presentation and to bring together, as best he can, its disparate activities into a coherent and convincing tale of sensible, compatible and purposeful administration. This cannot be done if he is at loggerheads with government departments.

I assume that if, as I expect, John Major is returned, his chief press secretary, Gus O'Donnell, will continue — at least, for a time. For all the restless desire for constant political change among journalists, they are happy with Gus from HM Treasury.

A Labour government brings only uncertainty. Will it be Alastair Campbell, of Labour's utterly slavish *Daily Mirror*? Or the man

with whom he bloodily clashed when Robert Maxwell went overboard — *The Guardian's* entertaining Michael White? Mr Kinnoch should perhaps think carefully about these two in view of his own excitable tendencies, which have been known to land him in privet hedges.

Or will it be Dave Hill, the Labour party's present communications chief? Or Julie Hall, Mr Kinnoch's personal press officer from Granada?

Or could the post be elevated to ministerial rank to give the celebrated Peter Mandelson a full time job as a member of the government, persuading press, radio and television that Labour is coming up roses?

On the other hand, Labour might go for a real pro from the Government Information Service. There is no shortage of talent. Labour, however, has seldom shown such wisdom in appointing its chief press secretary.

It is pointless to speculate about who might be handed the poisoned chalice in the event of a hung parliament without knowing how it is hung. Suffice it to say that the poor individual is doomed to early baldness, or greyiness, or conceivably both, and an early professional grave.

But what is important, whoever gets the job, are the values he or she brings to the post. If there is one, which matters above all, leaving aside a reverence for the facts, it is a determination to No 10 to give all journalists equal access to news.

I believe that John Major recognises this, after the calamity of the selective announcement last autumn that there was to be no November election. I fear that Labour remains addicted to selective briefing to the "white communique" of friendly journalists which, during the Harold Wilson era, did so much damage to Government-journalist relations.

Labour should cut it out. The party should realise that in the brittle world of journalism nothing is secret for long — not even the most secret beliefs. All will soon be revealed. After all, that is what journalism now seems mainly to be about: to explain the newsworthy, not the news.

PRESS WATCH

Bernard Ingham



Why Sunrise offers a brighter view

Christopher Stoddart, managing director of Sunrise Television, replies to last week's article, "Spilt Milk at Breakfast Time".

YOUR article prophesying a gloomy future for Sunrise Television was misleading for a number of reasons.

It made the mistake of assuming that Sunrise will have an identical financial and operating structure to TV-am and, indeed, the article's financial projections were based on this assumption.

In fact Sunrise's structure will be entirely different from TV-am's and it is this difference which allowed us to make the highest bid. It is also what assures our future.

TV-am had a staff of 400 people whereas Sunrise will have a maximum of 140. We have an efficient and cost-effective operating base at the London Television Centre, where we will share facilities with LWT and Carlton Television. TV-am had a costly stand-alone operation.

In general, both the capital costs

and the day-to-day operating costs of Sunrise Television will be very low compared with those of TV-am — an advantage for Sunrise which results from being an entirely new operation and which we have exploited to the full.

The important point is that, while these factors enable Sunrise Television to operate efficiently, they do not detract from value on screen. Indeed they enhance it. We believe that Sunrise Television will be spending more on programmes than TV-am.

TV-am's audience is not restrict-

ed to the tabloid reader. While it appeals mostly to a young audience, it attracts more AB viewers than its competitor on BBC1. However, Sunrise will not be looking for a more upmarket audience but will be continuing the successful programme mix established by TV-am.

The article was also ill-informed on the subject of the recent placing of Sunrise Television shares. The original Sunrise investors had taken up their full quota of equity and the balance of Sunrise shares was therefore put on the market.

This sale was completed in a total of 20 working days, a remarkably short period for this type of transaction.

There were more potential shareholders than could be satisfied. Carlton Communications was preferred to a number of other companies of equally high financial standing.

With Carlton Communications joining the initial shareholders Sunrise is fully funded and with a strong management is well placed to take the business forward successfully.

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Until banks provide funds, development in Czechoslovakia and Poland will be just an eastern premise, Christopher Warman reports

Smart business looks eastward

The long recession in Britain, bringing stagnation to the property market, has prompted the property industry's smarter operators to seek opportunities elsewhere. Attention is increasingly being focused on Eastern Europe, where the struggle to transform centrally controlled economies into free markets is proceeding painfully.

Observers speak in general terms of the potential of Poland and Czechoslovakia, for example, but few British companies yet have a physical presence there.

Gleeds, a quantity surveyor with 23 offices in Britain and Europe, is one company that has decided to take advantage of the possibilities and has recently opened offices in Warsaw and Prague. If the profession of quantity surveyor appears a narrow discipline, it is certainly expanded in Gleeds' operations in these two capitals.

The company is grappling with tasks ranging from feasibility studies and construction cost planning to general property advice, project management and evaluations for privatisation — all aspects of construction work.

The local view in Warsaw, describing the office market as

standards and Tokyo's lack of space, contains some truth, and illustrates the challenge for the Polish government and overseas investors. There is a serious shortage of good office space, which has pushed rents in central Warsaw up to £40 a sq ft, and the infrastructure needs to be upgraded.

From the Gleeds' office in the Palace of Culture, the vast building provided by Stalin that dominates Warsaw's skyline, Ray Tanner, the partner in charge, says that the first task was educational.

"We have been speaking to ministers and mayors about the development process, about tendering and competition methods, value for money and cost control," he explains.

"There is a lack of know-how, and that must be gained. Otherwise, we will see a mess."

A serious obstacle to development is land ownership. Three or four people can claim to own the same land and the difficulties of settling ownership is stopping development.

Mr Tanner says that many companies intend to make Warsaw their Polish headquarters and the country needs "some really

good British developers to show the Poles how to build efficiently and quickly".

He argues also that there should be greater British investment and suggests that one of the main banks should go to Poland to facilitate that.

At present, the Austrians dominate the field. They are engaged in several projects, including a business centre, hotels and accommodation. Swedish companies, too, are prominent, their main scheme being the 150,000 sq m (about 1.6 million sq ft) Eurocenter, by CA Real Estate Development Company, which will provide a five-star hotel, a health centre, offices, shops and a restaurant.

The Bristol Hotel, retaining a fine period facade, is a scheme for a five-star hotel for Trusthouse Forte-Orbis. The project is taking a long time but is now nearing completion. The developers aim to make it Warsaw's leading hotel.

Gleeds' activity here lies mainly in feasibility studies, valuations and organising international development competitions, so in these early months about 75 per cent of its work is speculative.

The Prague office, which opened last June, has a similar



Conversion: this building in Prague's theatre complex will become 50,000 sq ft of offices

role. As in Warsaw, Gleeds has formed an association with a local multi-discipline construction consultancy.

There is more activity in Prague than in Warsaw, and the "transformation" appears to be further advanced. However, the familiar issues of property ownership and land restitution and investment remain priorities.

Dr Jaromir Veprek, of the Czech

institute of economy, emphasised to see the urgent need for foreign capital. "It is slightly sad that most of it is from Germany," he said.

"Why not from Britain? German policy is to gain influence here, and the German firms offer better terms. After them, come Austria and Spain. Britain is over-cautious."

He said that all Czech enterprises were in transition because of

privatisation. He urged British companies to consider joint ventures, in which tax advantages were attractive.

The first large office development scheme carried out by a British business is a refurbishment near Wenceslas Square in the city centre, by Flow East, a small enterprise trying to do what the bigger companies are not yet prepared to risk. Steven Davis, of

Flow East, says funding is difficult to obtain. "Barclays is here, but is not geared up for funding. Neither is the Czech government. The Germans and Austrians are more bullish, the British more cautious. We are very excited about investment in Czechoslovakia but we need British or Czech funding."

Gleeds has been involved in Flow East's projects, and has undertaken a wide range of work. One of its latest schemes is project management for the conversion of a restaurant building to offices at the National Theatre complex, and it is eyeing several prime sites for development, and appraising bids for a £100 million trade centre scheme.

Ralph Turner, the head of Gleeds' Prague office, explains his approach: "We want to be involved in construction work, and that means we have to do more than be just quantity surveyors. There are a lot of tourists, but a lack of hotels and infrastructure, and a lack of restaurants. The leisure industry has great potential, with huge interest from Germans and Austrians in the spa industry. Our interest is in offices and hotels."

He says developers have been interested in sounding out the market, but many are waiting until the difficulties surrounding land ownership are cleared up.

The scale of the challenge, and the reason why developers and investors will go in eventually is summed up in Mr Turner's comment: "There are great opportunities in Poland and Czechoslovakia for 50 years of building."

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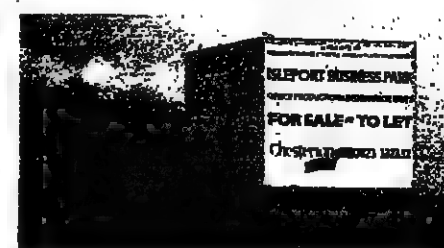
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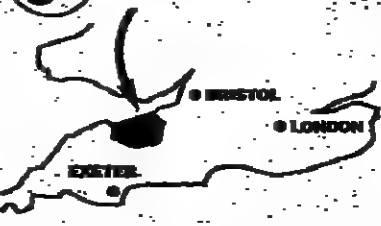
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- 6.00 **CeeFax** (98936) 6.30 **BBC Breakfast News** (5707026)
 9.05 **Kilroy**. Robert Kilroy-Glik chairs a studio discussion on a topical subject (9271487) 9.50 **Hot Chefs**. Paul and Jeanne Rankin prepare two of chicken Roscoff (9244723)
 10.00 **News**, regional news and weather (8189433) 10.05 **Playdays** (r) (8734758) 10.25 **Bump** (r) (8161520) 10.35 **No Kidding**. Family quiz game show (r) (9602452)
 11.00 **News**, regional news and weather 11.05 **Helday**. Jimmy Mulville cruises with Club Med and David Jessel spends a long weekend in Morocco (r) (CeeFax) (r) (3251013) 11.30 **People Today** presented by Miriam Stoppard and Adrian Miles (9037926)
 12.20 **Pebble Mill**. Music and art introduced by Judi Spiers (2757655) 12.55 **Regional News** and weather (9038938)
 1.00 **One O'Clock News** and weather (31758)
 1.30 **Neighbours**. (CeeFax) (r) (4132079) 1.50 **Going for Gold**. General knowledge quiz with European contestants, hosted by the charismatic Harry Kelly (4772015)
 2.15 **Hawaii Five-O**. McGarrett investigates a murder case in which his former flame is the prime suspect. Starring Jack Lord (7301471) 3.05 **Help Your Child With Science**. How day trips and holidays can help children to learn about the natural world (1972487)
 3.15 **Primmities**. Last in the series of the topical magazine for the older viewer, presented by David Jacobs and Sheila McGlennan (6305162)
 3.50 **Caterpillar Trail**. Nature series. Nicola Davies visits the chalk grasslands of Wiltshire and Stuart Bradley is in the Somerset wetlands (r) (9888891) 4.05 **Fiddley Fiddle**. Animation (r) (4025452) 4.15 **Jackanory**. Rory McGrath reads *The Boggart Who Wouldn't Tell Her Name* by Martin Riley (r) (5255449) 4.30 **The New York Times** (r) (9892065) 4.55 **Countryfile** (1127574)
 5.00 **Newsweek** (3557192) 5.10 **A Likely Lad**. Episode three of the six-part children's drama set at the turn-of-the-century. (CeeFax) (r) (2983433)
 5.35 **Neighbours** (r). (CeeFax) (r) (939742) Northern Ireland: Inside Ulster (r) (939742)
 6.00 **Six O'Clock News** with Anna Ford and Andrew Harvey. (CeeFax) (r) (471)
 6.30 **Regional News** (723) Northern Ireland: Neighbours
 7.00 **Liverpool** in Europe. Desmond Lynam introduces live coverage of the UEFA cup quarter-final between Genoa and Liverpool at the Luigi Ferraris Stadium. The commentators are Barry Davies and Trevor Bocking (7189947)
 9.20 **News** with Martin Lewis. (CeeFax) Regional news and weather (715607)



Fitness fanatics Todd, Milne and Mary Maronovich (9.50pm)

- 9.50 **O.E.D.: Superstars**.
 ● **CHOICE**: Mary Maronovich is a fitness coach from California who is determined that his children shall become sporting superstars. To that end he starts training them when they are barely out of nappies. Out goes junk food, in comes an intensive regime of physical activity. The process has apparently worked with Mary's oldest son, Todd, who has become an outstanding American footballer. Now he is trying to work the magic on his younger children, who are only three and five. The film raises the obvious question of whether it is possible to manufacture athletes in this way, and, if so, whether it is desirable. The first question leads to the nature-nurture debate, the second to stories of ten-year-olds getting arthritis and stress fractures. But it seems most American kids get too little exercise, not too much. (CeeFax) (411835)
 10.20 **Fine Plain Clothes** (1989) starring Alfred Howard, Suzie Amis and George Wendt. A media-for-television comedy about a new policeman who is assigned to investigate the murder in a classroom of his old teacher. His prime suspect is his younger brother. Directed by Martha Coolidge. (CeeFax) (256889)
 11.55 **Weather** (951989) 12.00 **CeeFax**
 2.00am **The Way Ahead**. The seventh programme in the series explaining the benefits of the disability (r) (8873259)
 2.15 **The Way Ahead**. A repeat of the first six programmes (208211). Ends at 3.45

BBC 2

- 6.45 **Open University: Caring for Data** (8101810). Ends at 7.10
 8.00 **Breakfast News** (9948810)
 8.15 **Westminster**. A round-up of news from both Houses (9815278)
 9.00 **Daytime on 2: Tutorial Topics** 9.10 **Christianity in a Material World** (r) 9.30 **Disc Times** 9.45 **You and Me** 10.40 **Thankabout Science** 10.15 **Search Out Science** 10.40 **Around Scotland** 11.00 **Words and Pictures** 11.15 **Learning Time** 11.25 **Teaching Today** 12.05 **TV6: Nippon** - the Learning Machine 12.30 **Litescap** 12.55 **An Introduction to Mexican Spanish** 12.30 **Pigeon Street** 1.35 **King Rollo** 1.40 **Tales from Europe** - Czechoslovakia
 2.00 **News** and weather (7449742) Followed by **You and Me** (r) (56022487) 2.15 **Cannae**. Michael Carraway explores the folk art collection at the American Museum near Bath (32134520) 2.35 **Country File**. A repeat of Sunday's edition which saw the launch of *Flora Britannica*, a nationwide research project to assess the cultural and visual importance of plants in the 1990s (9270704)
 3.00 **News** and weather (3708523) followed by **Westminster Live**, introduced by Vivian White (5554988) 3.50 **News**, regional news and weather (4771548)
 4.00 **Catchword**. Paul Coia with another edition of the game for wordmiths (r) (636) 4.30 **Seabrook's Year**. The first of five programmes about an important year in the life of Richard Seabrook, shepherd and landscape painter, who lived in the 19th century (r) (525)
 5.00 **Holiday Outings**. J. M. Diamond reports on a week's stay in New York at the Plaza Hotel (r) (3655704)
 5.10 **Horizon: An Expressive Theology**. A documentary investigation into how the government determines the budget for science (r). (CeeFax) (r) (5252910)
 6.00 **Star Trek: The Next Generation**. Science fiction adventures. The crew, unbeknown to the crew of the USS Enterprise, Captain Picard is kidnapped and replaced by an evil look-alike. Starring Patrick Stewart. (CeeFax) (503029)
 6.50 **DEF II** begins with **Reportage**, presented by Aminatta Foma (375087) 7.30 **Reportage**. Includes Brit award winner Seal talking about AIDS (r) (939742)
 8.00 **The Day the World Changed**. In the last of the series Roger Scruton selects November 4, 1789, when a radical sermon and a letter from overseas provoked Edmund Burke into writing *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (94075)



East West: award-winning Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia (8.10pm)

- 8.10 **Timeless Tito**. The second in a two-part series celebrating the 100th anniversary of Marshall Tito's birth. This programme examines how, after the end of the second world war, Tito was able to play the east against the west to his own advantage (500617)
 9.00 **Fine Plain Clothes** (1989) starring Alfred Howard and John Davies. A psychological thriller about a housewife who, after being viciously assaulted, formulates a deadly plan of revenge. Directed by Andy Anderson (3617)
 10.20 **Newsnight** with Jeremy Paxman (188013)
 11.15 **The Late Show**. Arts and media magazine (r) (934758)
 11.55 **Weather** (361616)
 12.00 **Open University: Literature in the Modern World** (30719). Ends at 12.30am
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ITV

- 6.00 **TV-am** (3896487)
 6.25 **Lucky Ladders**. Word association game hosted by Lennie Henry (r) (9351723) 6.55 **Thames News** (9218810)
 10.00 **The Time... The Place...** John Stapleton chairs a topical discussion (r) (9945487)
 10.40 **This Morning**. Magazine series (4534704)
 12.10 **Albion**. Children's entertainment (r) (937182)
 12.30 **News** with Nicholas Owen and Sonia Russell. (Oracle) Weather (7818704) 1.10 **Thames News** (7728907)
 1.20 **Home and Away**. Australian family drama series. (Oracle) (9358723) 1.50 **A Country Practice** (r) (9082723)
 2.20 **Graham Kerr**. The former *Galloping Gourmet* prepares a Thai salad sandwich (4619488) 2.50 **Take the High Road**. Soap set in the Highlands (827723)
 3.15 **ITN News headlines** (3725297) 3.20 **Thames News headlines** (3718810) 3.35 **The Young Doctors**. City-based Australian medical drama (918182)
 3.55 **The Dreamstones**. Cartoon fantasy series (r) (4792162) 4.20 **Finders Keepers**. Destructive game show (r) (877233) 4.50 **ITV Children's** and environmental series (3012182)
 5.10 **Home and Away** (r). (Oracle) (935452)
 5.40 **News** with John Suchet. (Oracle) Weather (882013)
 5.55 **Thames News**. Community action news, introduced by Jackie Spradley (117100) 6.30 **Thames News**. (Oracle) (938)
 6.30 **Coronation Street** (Oracle) (891)
 7.00 **The European Match**. Elton Wiley introduces live coverage of the European Cup Winners' cup quarter-final first leg between Feyenoord and Tottenham Hotspur in Rotterdam. The commentators are Brian Moore and the former England and Tottenham striker Bobby Robson. Plus extended highlights of the first leg of the Rumboule cup semi-final between Middlebrough and Manchester United at Ayrton Park (2008394)
 8.15 **Film: Frantic** (1988).
 ● **CHOICE**: The name of Roman Polanski on the director's credit may raise expectations that the film does not fulfil, but it is a smoothly efficient thriller with an agreeable light touch. Harrison Ford plays an American doctor who arrives in Paris for a medical conference, loses his suitcase and becomes involved in a hectic search for his missing wife. The script, by Polanski and his regular collaborator Gérard Brach, makes the most of Ford as the innocent abroad, introduces Emmanuelle Bégin as a shady lady who helps Ford in his quest and works in the sort of set-pieces, notably a suspenseful trip to the Montmartre roof-top, that were mastered by Alfred Hitchcock. Polanski's dark and subversive quality of Polanski's best work but he needed a safe haven after the disaster of *Pirates* and here it is (continues after the news). (Oracle) (r) (58758)
 10.00 **News** at Ten with Alastair Stewart and Carol Barnes. (Oracle) Weather (40219) 10.30 **Thames News** (310237)
 10.40 **Film: Frantic** (1988) (943636)
 12.10am **Film: The Black Rose** (1950) starring Tyrone Power and Grace Kelly. Romantic drama, set in the 13th century, about a Saxon nobleman who wisely decides to leave England after leading an unsuccessful revolt against the king, and makes his way to the Orient in the company of his faithful bond. Once there they join the caravan of a Mongol chieftain and make the acquaintance of his captive known as the Black Rose. Directed by Henry Hathaway (2482174) 2.15 **America's Top Ten** (r) (44363)
 2.45 **VideoPlus+**. A look at primitive history (3005124)
 3.10 **Quiz Night** presented by Ted Robbins (3761672)
 3.40 **High Road**. This is *Home*. Family Franchise, Wes Craven's creation for his *Home* on Elm Street series of films (r) (29183037)
 4.10 **Along the Cotswold Way**. Clive Ginn travels from Painswick to Prinknash Abbey (1326019)
 4.40 **Fifty Years On** (by). Vintage newsreels (36524821)
 5.00 **News** at Ten. Two more stories of survival against the odds (57327)
 5.30 **ITN Morning News** with Phil Rosten (55414). Ends at 6.00

CHANNEL 4

- 6.00 **Channel 4 Daily** (3894029) 9.25 **Schools** (5411883)
 12.00 **The Parliament Programme** presented by Glyn Medias (47828)
 12.30 **Business Daily**. The latest news and analysis from the world's money markets (90549)
 1.00 **Seaside Street**. Entertaining pre-school learning series. The guest is actor Tim Robbins (54704)
 2.00 **Film: This Is My Affair** (1937, b/w) starring Robert Taylor and Barbara Stanwyck. Period drama set at the turn-of-the-century about a US Navy officer who is sent undercover by President McKinley to infiltrate a gang of train robbers. He is arrested at the same time as the assassination of the president. Directed by William A. Seiter (281297)
 3.55 **Pete Smith Specialities**. Aquatic Kids. A group of youngsters demonstrate water skiing skills at Florida's Cypress Gardens (r) (8728100)
 4.00 **Short Stories: Learning To Be Ladies**. A look behind the scenes at an English finishing school (r) (704)
 4.30 **Countdown**. Richard Whiteley with another round of the words and numbers game (r) (988)
 5.00 **The Oprah Winfrey Show**. Today's guest is Oliver Stone, the director of the controversial JFK film (4707431)
 5.55 **Laurel and Hardy**. Cartoon adventures (r) (115742)
 6.00 **Time and Tide**. Susan Saint-James and Jane Curtin star in the comedy series about two divorcees sharing single parenthood and a Greenwich Village home. (Teletext) (181)
 6.30 **Tonight with Jonathan Ross**. The guests include the former West Indian cricket captain Viv Richards (r) (453)
 7.00 **Channel 4 News** with Jon Snow and Zainab Badawi. (Teletext) (24737)
 7.50 **Star Political Comment** from a Conservative party politician (46955)
 8.00 **Brookside**. Soap set in suburban Merseyside. (Teletext) (1665)



The benefits of a Mediterranean-style diet: Drew Smith (8.30pm)

- 8.30 **The Food File**.
 ● **CHOICE**: The first edition of a new food series tells us something we have heard many times before but probably need to hear again, that greasy breakfasts, chocolate bars and fizzy drinks form one of the quickest routes to an early grave. The healthiest diet in Europe, according to the programme, is that enjoyed by people on the Mediterranean coast of Spain, Italy and Greece. It comprises fruit and vegetables, fish, cereals and, above all, olive oil, with not a steak or a piece of cheese in sight. To make the point the show descends on an overweight family from Worthing and encourages them to swap their fry-ups for a healthy Mediterranean cuisine. The results will be revealed next week. Meanwhile *The Food File* looks like being a crisp and pertinent series that promises to treat the subject with a welcome lack of reverence. (Teletext) (r) (3002)
 9.00 **Dispatches**. A documentary exposure of the inadequacies in the computer system at the Sizewell B power station that could jeopardise the future of nuclear power in this country (470548)
 9.45 **Letters from St Petersburg**. The third of six programmes from Russia's second city looking at how its citizens are coping with the first winter since the demise of the USSR (950758)
 10.00 **The Golden Girls**. Delightful comedy series about four women of a certain age sharing a Miami beachfront home. (Teletext) (r) (46955)
 10.30 **The Jack Dee Show**. More comedy from the deadpan-faced funny man. The guest is singer Sam Brown (24075)
 11.00 **Drop the Dead Donkey**. Up-to-date comedy, when first shown, set in a television newsroom (r) (r) (5029)
 11.30 **James Hemminger Don't Hurt Me**. A musical drama written and performed by rap star MC Hammer (r) (r) (218471)
 12.25am **Tonight with Jonathan Ross** (r) (r) (524035)
 12.55 **Disk Spinner**. Puppet series created by Gerry Anderson about a cool New York private investigator (825376). Ends at 1.00

SATELLITE

SKY ONE
 ● Via the Astra and Marquillo satellites.
 5.00am **The DJ Kai Show** (9077230) 5.40 **Mr Poppers** (9890709) 5.55 **Playboy** (9842278) 5.55 **Cartoons** (9890709) 6.30 **The New Line** (r) to **Seaver** (19999) 10.00 **News** (45487) 10.30 **The Young Doctors** (97588) 11.00 **The Field and the Beautiful** (25742) 11.30 **The Young and the Restless** (95278) 12.30am **Barnaby Jones** (18810) 1.30 **Another World** (98704) 2.30 **Star Search** (9407288) 2.45 **Wife of the Week** (40568) 3.15 **The Betty White Show** (48181) 3.45 **The DJ Kai Show** (9077230) 5.00 **Cartoons** (9077230) 5.30 **Switch** (9077230) 5.55 **Cartoons** (9077230) 6.30 **Cartoons** (9077230) 6.55 **Cartoons** (9077230) 7.00 **Cartoons** (9077230) 7.30 **Cartoons** (9077230) 7.55 **Cartoons** (9077230) 8.00 **Cartoons** (9077230) 8.30 **Cartoons** (9077230) 8.55 **Cartoons** (9077230) 9.00 **Cartoons** (9077230) 9.30 **Cartoons** (9077230) 9.55 **Cartoons** (9077230) 10.00 **Cartoons** (9077230) 10.30 **Cartoons** (9077230) 10.55 **Cartoons** (9077230) 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